THE

FRENCH CONVERT:

Being a true Relation of the happy Converſion of

A Noble French Lady,

From the Errors and Superſtitions of Popery, to the Reformed Religion, by means of a Proteſtant Gardener, her Servant.

WHEREIN IS SHEWN,

Her great and unparalelled Sufferings, on the Account of her ſaid Converſion; as alſo her wonderful Deliverance from two Aſſaſſins hired by a Popiſh Prieſt to murder her: And of her miraculous Preſervation in a Wood for two Years; and how ſhe was at laſt providentially found by her Huſband; who, together with her Parents, were brought over to the embracing of the true Religion, as were divers others alſo.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A Relation of the fearful State of

FRANCIS SPIRA,

After he turned APOSTATE from the Proteſtant CHURCH to POPERY.

WITH

ORIGEN's LAMENTATION,

For offering INCENSE in an IDOL TEMPLE, after he was a Miniſter of the Goſpel.

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The COPY of a LETTER ſent from a FRENCH PROTESTANT MINISTER in FRANCE, to his Friend in LONDON, with the following Relation.

My very good Friend,

" HAVING received yours the 13th of April, N. S. I " was not a little overjoyed, even in my ſuffering, to " hear you are well ſettled in a country, where you have the " freedom of enjoying the exerciſe of the true religion, a " thing to be valued above all other earthly bleſſings; and " not only that, but I am much more glad to find you in- " form me, that the climate ſo well agrees with you and your " family, that you have been healthful ever ſince you depart- " ed from me, and the reſt of your dear friends here; though " many of us, and particularly myſelf, labour under many " ſufferings and afflictions; I having (with many others) " languiſhed a long time in priſon, for the ſake of a good " conſcience, afflicted with much ſickneſs, by reaſon of my " cloſe confinement, which (bleſſed be the name of God " enabling me) I have borne with patience; though many " have died unpitied of their cruel perſecutors, yet the cry of " innocent blood may in time make them cry, How hard " it is to kick againſt the pricks; yet my prayers are, that " inſtead of ſending any fearful judgment on theſe Popiſh " Adverſaries, God would turn their hearts, enlighten their " underſtandings, make them ſee the errors of their ways, " and repent of the many evils they have done to the poor " Proteſtants, without any manner of cauſe or provocation, " to whom their rage and malice extend, even beyond death; " for they ſtill continue their old way of denying them Chriſ- " tian burial. But this is all our comfort, It matters not " where our bodies lie, if ſo be our ſouls are enfolded in " Chriſt's arms. Yet among the miſeries and threats of " death, which I have undergone in taking care of the ſpi- " ritual welfare of thoſe that God has committed to my

" charge, I cannot but be greatly comforted when you tell
" me the French Proteſtant Church in England, flouriſhes;
" and that the members of it walk worthy of their calling;
" gaining by their inoffenſive way of living, a good repute
" among ſtrangers, when in their native country ſo much
" inhumanity appears towards thoſe of the Reformed Pro-
" feſſion; for the perſecution in many places, rages ſtill by
" their impoveriſhing of thouſands of families. But not to be
" tedious to you, having nothing left to ſend you but my good
" wiſhes and prayers, except the incloſed account of a very
" ſtrange, but bleſſed alteration in the family of the Count
" Alanſon, a worthy nobleman, well known to you. I have
" drawn it up upon the ſtricteſt enquiry into the truth of all
" the material circumſtances as well as my ſufferings, and
" ſpare time that the care of thoſe under my charge, would
" permit; and ſend it to you as a token of my love for the
" many kindneſſes I have received at your hands: and that
" ſo you might communicate it to others, and make it pub-
" lic if you ſee occaſion, that all may be made ſenſible of
" the wonderful goodneſs of Almighty God, and praiſe him
" for the works he doth unto the children of men. For the
" certainty of what I have written, though I have been oblig-
" ed, for method ſake, to uſe a few expreſſions of my own,
" you may firmly rely on my integrity, who am always a
" well-wiſher to the health of your ſoul and body."

A. D'AUBORN.

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FRENCH CONVERT, &c.

IN writing of the following relation, wherein injured innocence and oppreſſed virtue, does ſo eminently triumph over all the rage and malice, both of men and devils, I ſhall not ſtudy to adorn my ſtile with flowers of rhetoric, but lead thee by the clue of truth into the adorable myſteries of divine providence, which are here diſplayed in ſuch a ſeries of wonders as can ſcarce be paralelled. As an introduction to which, I will a little conſider how the divine goodneſs delights to bring light out of darkneſs, and makes even the wicked confound themſelves in their own devices, that out of their evil deſigns he may bring good to paſs. For, as Joſeph's being ſold into Egypt, and there falſely accuſed of adultery, advanced him next to a throne, and turned to the ſhame of his accuſing miſtreſs and treacherous brethren: (tho' at the beginning, God meant it for good) that he might be inſtrumental to preſerve his father and his houſhold alive, and turned the malice of the patriarchs into a bleſſing; ſo the miſeries and extraordinary ſufferings of the noble lady whoſe ſtory I am going to recite, were made uſe of by divine providence, as a means of the conver-

ſion of her huſband, parents and many others, to the true religion; which, as ſhe has often ſince ſaid, has been a very ample and glorious recompence. But I ſhall not anticipate what with more ſatisfaction you will find in the relation itſelf; which take as follows.

In Britany, one of the faireſt provinces of France, there lately lived Count Alanſon, a perſon of noble extraction, and of an eſtate ſuitable to the greatneſs of his birth and thoſe noble qualities that enriched his mind. Who being a lover of military actions, was eaſily perſuaded to ſerve the king in the wars; where having an eminent command given him, he behaved himſelf with a bravery that gained him the admiration of his enemies, the love of his friends, and freſh honors of his king, who took particular notice of his great performances. But in the interval of two or three campaigns, he caſt his eyes upon one Deidamia, a young lady of a quality not inferior to himſelf in birth, whoſe beauty and virtue were equally attractive: to her he made his addreſſes, and the quality of their birth, and the ſuitableneſs of their diſpoſitions, made his conqueſt the more eaſy; ſo that in a little time they were contracted and married, to their mutual joy and ſatisfaction.

This happy couple having for a whole winter enjoyed the bleſſing of each other's mutual love

love and endearing affections, without the leaſt umbrage of any interpoſing cloud that might give any allay to their happineſs; at length the ſpring came on, and the armies gathering together, ſummoned Alanſon from the repoſe he took in the ſoft embraces of his chaſte and loving wife, to the field of war, to act his part again upon that ſtage of honor, where he had already acquired ſo much reputation. But he never ſeemed ſo unwilling to court fame abroad, as now ſince he muſt of neceſſity leave behind him the deareſt part of himſelf; he had many ſtrugglings and combats in his mind, which ſeemed to be divided between love and honor; he was loth to leave his lady, and yet unwilling to have his reputation ſullied: and theſe different paſſions in the mind, cauſed ſuch an alteration in his countenance, that it was taken notice of by his lady, who not knowing the cauſe, was the more troubled at it; and therefore following him one day into the garden, whither he had retired to conſider with himſelf what he had beſt to do, ſhe earneſtly preſſed him to let her know what it was that troubled him; for ſhe had for ſome time, ſhe ſaid, obſerved he was diſquieted, but could not tell at what; and ſhe was fearful ſhe might, though ſhe knew it not, be the occaſion of it; adding, command me in any thing a wife can juſtly do, and I am all obedience. This tender carriage of his lady added freſh fuel to the fire

of

of his afflictions, and made him ſtill far more unwilling to leave her. Wherefore cauſing her to ſit down by him, he told her, ſhe was indeed the innocent occaſion of his trouble, for her great love and tenderneſs to him, had ſo engaged his heart to her in a reciprocal affection, that he knew not how to think of leaving her, though honour called him loudly to the field. His lady, when he talked of leaving her, was hardly kept from ſwooning in his arms, and could not forbear ſaying, What! muſt we part then? ah, wretched Deidamia! & ſtraightway ſhe fell a weeping: her tears did ſo prevail upon the Count, that love had now obtained an entire victory, and he reſolved to ſtay at home with Deidamia; and therefore entreated her to dry up her tears, and be comforted: for he had now come to a reſolution, rather to undergo ſome hard cenſures for ſtaying at home, than by going to the camp to leave his dear Deidamia diſconſolate.—Theſe kind aſſurances of her huſband gave her that ſatisfaction which ſoon ſhewed it ſelf in a chearful countenance; and the endearing expreſſions ſhe gave the Count on that occaſion, made him conclude they were both happy in each other's love.

But behold the inconſtancy of worldly happineſs, and how little we can promiſe ourſelves of it here! we may indeed both purpoſe and reſolve, but we can't ſecure ourſelves from diſappointments; the footſteps of divine providence

are

are often hard to trace. Hence it is that we are told by the inſpired penman, *That the ways of God are in the deep, and his paths in the great waters, and his footſteps are not known.* And we ſee often, whatever pleaſing proſpect of felicity we have in view, ſome unforeſeen occaſion, or ſudden turn of providence, deſtroys it, and in a moment deprives us of that happineſs which we had promiſed to ourſelves for many years: and yet theſe changes, to thoſe that fear the Lord, are ſo diſpoſed and ordered by God's providence, that in the end they evidently work together for their good. And thus it fell out in the inſtance before us; for whilſt Alanſon and his Deidamia delighted in each other, and were both happy in their conjugal affection, an accident fell out, that put him under a neceſſity of going to the camp, which was, that a colonel's place in the regiment of Picardy being vacant, a relation of Alanſon's, at court, out of a too officious kindneſs, put the king in mind of the good ſervice of Alanſon, and deſired his majeſty to beſtow that vacancy upon him: to which his majeſty (being ſenſible of his former bravery and good ſervice) readily conſented and ordered his commiſſion to be ſent to him; which was done accordingly. When Alanſon received his commiſſion from the purſuviant who brought it, he gave him a generous reward for his pains; but was not very well pleaſed, either with the new honour his

his majeſty had given him, nor with his kinſman's too officious kindneſs in procuring it; becauſe it put him under a neceſſity of parting from his lady, which give him a very ſenſible diſpleaſure: but knowing that by his commiſſion he was engaged too far for a retreat, his care was how to make his Deidamia as eaſy as he could: and therefore calling her to take a turn with him in the garden, and leading her into an arbour covered with jeſſamine, he thus began to tell her the unwelcome news that had been brought him. My deareſt Deidamia, let me conjure you not to be troubled at what I am now going to tell you, but if you will oblige me, do it by ſhewing your reſolution and fortitude of mind; and yet I cannot but own, that our reſolves, like little heaps of ſand, are quickly brought to nothing; but the decrees of heaven, like the foundations of the earth, are fixed for ever. 'Twas in this very arbour, my deareſt Deidamia, that I reſolved to ſtay at home with thee, and not return to the campaign in Flanders: and I appeal to him who knows my heart, how firmly I intended: but ſee here, how I am forced againſt my will to break my reſolution; and with that he ſhewed her the commiſſion the king had ſent him to be colonel of the regiment of Picardy and now you ſee, my Deidamia, the neceſſity that lies upon me to leave you for a time; but though our bodies be divided, we will have one ſoul

and

and love, whilſt providence denies us to live together. And whilſt I in the field am fighting for my country; you ſhall ſtay here and pray for my ſucceſs: and if it pleaſes God that I return, (which I do not doubt at all, for Heaven I am ſure will hear your fervent prayer) it will be a new addition to my joy. to lay thoſe laurels I ſhall win in battle, at Deidamia's feet. Poor Deidamia, heard this heavy news with a ſad heart, but anſwered with piety and prudence worthy of herſelf, that ſince what happened was not of his ſeeking, but what the providence of God had called him to, ſhe thought it was her duty (though ſhe could hardly do it without reluctance) to aquieſce in the divine diſpoſal of human actions, and would endeavour to ſtifle her reſentments, rather than give him any farther trouble. Alanſon being no leſs pleaſed with Deidamia's prudence than her kind affection, which he expreſſed by ſeveral tender things, he applied himſelf to the getting ready of his equipage, in order to his departure; and then ſettling the affairs of his family, ordered Antonio his chaplain, who was a friar of the order of St. Francis, to ſay a ſolemn maſs for his ſucceſs in the field, and the protection of his lady and family in his abſence, recommending his deareſt Deidamia, to the care of Antonio his chaplain, and Fronovius his ſteward, to his houſhold, in theſe words: To your care, in my abſence, I recommend the ſafety and welfare

fare of my beloved lady, the moſt virtuous and loving of wives: and charge you, as you expect to anſwer to God and me, be obedient to all her commands; comfort and cheriſh her in her ſolitude, and ſee that all my domeſtics pay the like exact reſpects. This and much more, they faithfully promiſedto obſerve. Then giving liberally to each ſervant, and having notice that his equipage was ready, and divers gentlemen on horſeback waiting to accompany him, he took his ſolemn leave of his dear Deidamia, whoſe ſad preſaging heart was overcome with grief to that degree, that ſhe could only ſpeak theſe few prophetic words: Ah, my dear lord, may heaven prevent my fears! But my poor heart forebodes that this will be a long and fatal parting. To which the Count replied, do not caſt down thyſelf, dear Deidamia, by the indulging of ſuch melancholy fancies; but aſſure yourſelf, I'll haſten my return as much as poſſible, and I will ſend to you as often as I can. And in the mean time ſhall commit you to the protection of the Almighty, the bleſſed virgin mother, and all the holy ſaints and angels; and ſealing his affection on her lips with gentle kiſſes, he took his leave of her, and rode away, not thinking he had left an innocent dove to the protection of two ravenous vultures.

It is not much to my purpoſe to tell you, how well he was received at the head of his command, by the Duke of Luxemburgh, or what brave

brave exploits his courage carried him through, ſince neither fame, nor the public news from Paris, have been wanting to ſpeak his commendation: I therefore omit it, unleſs in ſome paſſages, where it will, in the thread of this amazing relation, be neceſſary to mention ſome particulars) and ſhall continue with the ſorrowful Deidamia, who after his departure ſeemed to have baniſhed all comfort from her breaſt; all that ſhe found was in her devotions and prayers to Almighty God, for his protection and ſafe return, greatly affecting ſolitude: and as much as ſhe could, avoiding the viſits of divers ladies, who (as they ſaid) came to make her merry, and divert her melancholy, ſhe being very well beloved, both by the nobility and gentry, for her comely carriage, modeſt behaviour, ſweetneſs of temper, and affability.

In the cool of the day, ſhe uſually made it her buſineſs to retire into her garden, penſive and alone, it being by the care and diligence of the gardener, kept and ordered like another paradiſe, ſtored with great variety of choice plants and flowers, adorned with pleaſant fountains, and ſeveral delightful arbours, ſhaded over with interwinding jeſſamine, in which ſhe and her abſent lord, had paſſed ſome joyful, as well as ſad hours, and at the rememberance of them would ſadly weep, then pray (according to the cuſtom of the Papiſts, who allow praying to ſaints) to the tutelary ſaints for his protection:

tection: And ſo drying up her tears, would walk thence again, taking but little reſt in any place: But one time paſſing by a bed of tulips, ſhe eſpied Bernard her gardener (for ſo he was called) buſy in watering them, and erecting ſuch as declined their drooping heads, occaſioned by the heat of the ſun's too ſcorching beams; ſhe had often in this man, obſerved a harmleſs native innocence, accompanied with acute ingenuity; (and indeed a gardener who underſtands his buſineſs as he ought to do, muſt be an ingenious man) and therefore imagined it might adminiſter to her, ſome advantage to hold diſcourſe with him, in what related to the myſteries of gardening, thinking it no undervaluing, though he was her menial ſervant, ſince ſhe had often read, That *kings princes and other great and wiſe men. had voluntarily become of this occupation: That Adam, when governor of all the world was employed in it by God himſelf*; ſo that coming cloſe to him, whilſt his hands were buſied at his work; the man by his ear, (his back being towards her) being informed of ſomebody's approach, ſuddenly ſtarted up, and ſeeing his beautiful lady near him, was a little ſurprized, and would have retired to give her the more freedom in her walks, but ſhe prevented him by ſaying, *Bernard, pray do not let me hinder you in your buſineſs: I come on purpoſe to obſerve your dexterity in gardening: I ſee you mind it with a juſt diligence*

though

though your lord is abſent. *Madam*, (replied he) *I beg your ladyſhip's pardon, in that I tell you, I am no eye ſervant, as well knowing I muſt give an account to God, as well as to man, if I am negligent in what I promiſe to perform, and am entruſted with.* Deidamia ſtood ſurpriſed at the man's plain, but ingenious reply: and changing ſomewhat the manner of her diſcourſe, aſked him diverſe queſtions about the virtues, natures, qualities and production of flowers and plants, *&c.* in all which he ſatisfied her to her admiration; by which ſhe perceived him *better learned in the myſteries of nature, than ſhe expected from one of his profeſſion.* And to be briet, ſhe often held ſuch innocent converſation with him, when at any time ſhe found him buſy in the garden, being much delighted to hear him diſcourſe how much of the wiſdom and goodneſs of God might be learned from the works of creation; for he had a particular faculty of ſpiritualizing his employment, and making his buſineſs ſerve, like Jacob's ladder, to carry him from earth to heaven. Which ſometimes cauſed her to reflect, that this man was ſome thing more than he appeared to be, (which indeed ſhe was not much miſtaken) ſo that entertaining a good opinion of him, ſhe ordered his lodging to be changed for a better; and his coarſe and homely commons to be enlarged, above what was uſual to thoſe of his profeſſion and degree.

But

But now Antonio the chaplain, however he had appeared like a ſaint to his maſter, began to ſhew himſelf a devil to his miſtreſs, and too plainly ſhewed his cloven foot; for though above fifty years of age, he had for ſome time harboured luſtful deſires towards the fair and beautiful Deidamia, that he was now reſolved to attempt her chaſtity. And though her virtue and her ſpotleſs chaſtity, might very well have kept him from purſuing his unclean deſires, yet he flattered himſelf with hopes of obtaining his end, by corrupting the judgment: In which he found himſelf very much miſtaken, as the ſequel will declare. For the divine goodneſs had a farther work to do for Deidamia; who being altogether ignorant of what this wretch deſigned againſt her honor, frequented her beloved garden as ſhe uſed to do; and one evening hearing the gardener reading in a lonely arbour, where he thought himſelf ſecure (for he had induſtriouſly concealed his being a Proteſtant from any of the family) her curioſity to hear him, made her draw nigh ſo ſoftly that he could not hear her: He was then reading the firſt chapter of the epiſtle to the Romans, from the 20th to the end of the 23d verſe, *viz.* "For the viſible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; ſo that they are without excuſe, becauſe that when they knew God,

God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh hearts were darkened; profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beaſts, and creeping things."

Having thus far proceeded, he pauſed, and with eyes lifted up to heaven, gave glory unto God, that had preſerved him blameleſs from theſe offences againſt his divine Majeſty, which thro' ignorance and ſuperſtition had overſpread the greateſt part of Europe. "O Lord, continued he, I humbly beſeech thee, as I have already ſuffered perſecution for thy name's ſake, and for the ſake of a good conſcience, ſo never let me depart from the ways of thy truth, to change thy incorruptible glory into an image made like corruptible man:" And when he had ſaid this tears ſtood in his eyes, and his words were ſucceeded by ſighs.

Deidamia, who had all this while attentively liſtened, found ſomething in her mind that made a ſudden uneaſy alteration, and thought to have gone away undiſcovered; but then again, her zeal for the Romiſh religion, which ſhe thought he had reproached by deteſting image-worſhip, carried her ſo far, that ſhe reſolved to give him a ſharp reprimand, leſt he preſiſting further, until diſcovered by others,

might ruin himſelf; though her goodneſs and gentle nature was not for working him any injury by revealing it. But never was man more ſurpriſed than Bernard, when he ſaw her, whom at that time of the day he little ſuſpected, as not being uſual; yet collecting his ſcattered ſenſes, he aroſe from his ſeat, and withal endeavoured to hide his Bible under his coat, thinking ſhe had been newly come, and might neither have heard him read, nor ſeen his Bible; but ſhe in a frowning manner, contrary to the wonted ſweetneſs of her temper, commanded him to deliver it to her, that the flames might conceal his fault; and told him, ſhe would not for that time diſcover his being converſant with a book ſo ſtrictly, by the church, prohibited to the laity; for (continued ſhe) it is enough that we believe as the church believes, without farther diſpute, or puzzling ourſelves with thoſe ſcruples and niceties which, in all probability, we may make a falſe conſtrution of, and wreſt even thoſe ſcriptures, that are the rule of our faith, to our own damnation.

This ſmart diſcourſe, and the frowns in the fair Deidamia's countenance, did not in this caſe ſo much daunt Bernard, as in another of leſs concern it might have done; but with ſome aſſurance, he reply'd, "Ah, madam! I little "thought of being ſurpriſed by you at my de- "votion, but ſince I am, I cannot grant what "you demand; rather you may command my

"body

" body to the flames, and as a willing martyr " I will ſooner go, than betray the cauſe of " God, in delivering up his holy word to be " conſumed, in which are contained all things " neceſſary to ſalvation: and it would be in " me an apparent contempt of that ſalvation, " ſhould I voluntarily, or through fear, caſt it " from me. As to your ſaying, madam, that " the church has prohibited the laity the uſe of " this ſacred book, eſpecially in a known tongue " I readily grant it; but, O moſt virtuous la- " dy, you little know their policy in that; it is " not that they fear or care what miſconſtruc- " tions men make of it; but becauſe it is like " arrows in the hand of a giant, ſtrong againſt " their worldly intereſt, plainly diſcovering " their errors and groſs idolatries."--He would have proceeded, but the heat of zeal prompted her haſtily to interrupt him, ſaying, Surely, Bernard, you are diſtracted, or elſe, what is worſe, a heretic: I took you to be wiſer, and more reaſonable, when I diſcourſed with you the other day. " Truly, madam," replied he " as for my being in my right ſenſes, I bleſs " Almighty God, he has in his mercy hitherto " continued them to me; and for my being a " heretic, pardon me, if St. Paul, anſwers for " me, when he was accuſed before Felix, ſay- " ing, " But this I confeſs unto thee, after the " way which they call hereſy, ſo worſhip I the " God of my fathers, believing all things

" which are written in the law and the pro-
" phets." Upon this, Deidamia, who by nature was all goodneſs, gentleneſs, and affableneſs, began to moderate her anger, and to conſider a little what he had ſaid; yet her zeal for the religion ſhe profeſſed, made her mildly rebuke him, and lay before him the danger he was in, if his opinion was diſcovered; biding him be cautious and wiſe in what he did; tho' for her part, he need not fear but ſhe would lock up what ſhe had diſcovered, in her breaſt, and it ſhould paſs no farther; and ſo departing, left him in ſome confuſion.

Deidamia, retiring to her chamber, began to conſider what had paſſed, and remembered ſhe had often wept in her tender years, when ſhe heard the cruelties the Roman Catholics uſed towards the Hugonots or Proteſtants in France; and diſapproving of their perſecuting ſpirit, as not of God, whoſe chiefeſt attribute is mercy, tender compaſſion and forgiveneſs; when, on the contrary, ſhe found thoſe who made religion ſo much their boaſt, ſo very cruel, that far from the inſtance of our Saviour's refuſing to call for fire from heaven to conſume thoſe that had injuriouſly and deſpitefully uſed him, they made their very worſhip and devotions a ſnare, to bring thoſe under their cruel handlings, who had in no wiſe offended them, but in being ſeparated from them and moving according to the dictates of their conſcience. She had

had likewiſe obſerved the harmleſſneſs and inoffenſive manner of living in the perſecuted, and often ſhewed ſome diſlike of the looſeneſs and unchriſtian practices of their perſecutors; ſo that although ſhe had a good opinion of the Romiſh religion, as having been brought up in it from her infancy, yet had ſhe not ſo of many of the profeſſors of it, who apparently derogated from the ways of virtue, and ſeemed to encourage vice.

This wrought ſome labourings in her mind, thro' the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit; and in her night thoughts more ſeriouſly reflecting on many things, and particularly on the Gardener's expreſſion out of St Paul's words to Felix the governor, infering from thence, That it muſt be the ſincerity of the heart towards God, more than the ſhew, or outward name, or profeſſion of any religion, that renders the perſon acceptable in his ſight. In the midſt of theſe cogitations and debates within herſelf, ſhe found ſomething (as 'twere by an over-ruling power) ſtrongly moved her to a deſire of farther converſing with Bernard, about the fundamentals of his religion; which, by the popiſh prieſts, as well in their pulpits, as private converſation had been repreſented ſo odious, damnable, and to be deteſted.

The morning no ſooner ſummoned the gardener to viſit his flowers and plants, and perform his uſual taſk in watering and ordering

them, but Deidamia, who had taken little reſt that night, aroſe; and having performed her orilon, and then refreſhed herſelf with a moderate refection, took an opportunity between that and dinner-time, to enter the garden privately, at a door that opened into it from her apartment; and to ſkreen the better what ſhe intended, from prying eyes, took divers turns, and gathered poſi s of flowers; and then fanning herſe f, as if the heat offended her, paſſing many winding alleys over ſpread with pleaſant ſhades, ſhe came to the before-mentioned arbour, and again ſurprized the gardener in his meditations; the man was not under any conſternation at her coming, but riſing and bowing low, would have departed out of good manners, to give her the ſole freedom of that pleaſant bower: but ſhe laid her commands on him to ſtay, ſaying, ſhe had conſidered of his former diſcurſe, and had made it her buſineſs to find him out, that he might give her ſome better reaſon for the opinion he held, than yet he had done.

His modeſty, and the humble thoughts he conceived of himſelf, would ſcarce give him leave to ſit down, though ſhe often commanded him ſo to do; but at laſt he complied, and then ſhe aſked him, upon what ground and foundation the baſis of his religion was fixed.

Gardener. It is founded on the ſcriptures of the old and new Teſtament, which were written by men inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt, and given

given for our inſtruction and learning; it is only the word of God that can warrant the truth of any profeſſion in religious matters; and that we Proteſtants (through God's aſſiſtance) labour to conform and live up to.

Deidamia. Ay, but you may be miſtaken in the miſinterpreting the ſcripture, and fall into groſs hereſies, as our church charges you; and therefore has ſtrictly forbid the laity of our communion to meddle with them, leſt, like weapons put into the hands of idiots, or madmen, they injure themſelves and others thereby.

Gard. Ah! lady, ſhall I be free, and deal plainly with you in this point?

Deid. With all my heart; let me hear what you can ſay in anſwer to it.

Gard. All ſcriptures are given for our learning. God is willing we ſhould know his revealed will, that we may be the better enabled to perform it. St. Paul commends the Beræans, and calls them noble, becauſe they ſearched the ſcriptures, to ſee whether the things they heard where ſo or not; and we have many commands for this; as, *Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read*, Iſaiah xxxiv. 16. *They were more noble, in that they ſearched the ſcriptures daily*, Acts xvii. 11. *Let the word of God, dwell richly in you*, Col. iii. 16. *From a child thou haſt known the ſcriptures*, 2. Tim. iii. 15. *Take the ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*, Eph. vi, 17. and many other

thers that I might mention, which are to be found in the ſcriptures; and this not commanded to ſome, but to all that ſeek ſalvation.

Deid. "Certainly, if our church had ſeen this fit, they would not have denied it; but being dangerous to ſouls, it ought to be reſtrained."

Gard. It is indeed dangerous to break God's commandments, and to teach men ſo to do, and to make the word of God of none effect by human tradition. We know the woes Chriſt pronounced againſt the Phariſees for theſe things.

Deid. "Why, who are guilty of this? The church of Rome, the holy catholic church, as it has in many ages been ſtiled, is not ſurely ſpotted with ſuch crimes."

Gard. I wiſh I could ſay it was not; but it deeply is guilty, as in many other particulars, ſo moſt eminently in this, that it profeſſes, no man is obliged to receive the ſcriptures as the word of God, or to believe any of it, but from the teſtimony of your church; and to awe men to ſuch a belief, threats of damnation are uſed, as well as the magiſtrate's ſwords, and cruel torments by inquiſitions, and, indeed, it is not done without ground; this is done to hinder prying into their groſs idolatries, errors, and ſuperſtitions, derogatory to the ſcriptures, and expreſs command of God.

Deid. "Sure you are beſide yourſelf: nor can you prove this; but being fallen from the church

church do this only in prejudice and ſpite, to lay a ſtain upon its virgin innocence.

Gard. No; it is apparent from the word of God, and even from reaſon itſelf, in thoſe that will conſider, and are not blind with ignorance, which your church, in her ſenſe, truly ſtiles the Mother of Devotion.

Deid. "Can any ſuch thing be in a church that is infallible? and to prove that it is ſo, it is ſaid to be built upon St. Peter; he is the rock ſpoken of, and this rock doth, together with St. Peter, include his ſucceſſors; and the church built on this rock (united to, and built upon the Pope) is infallible; for it is ſaid, *The gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.*"

Gard. Pardon me lady, if I ſay there is no agreement among the churchmen about this infallible judge; ſome will have it the Pope, ſome a General Council, and others both: none of your writers have yet concluded on it. However, theſe words are perverted; for it is more probable, that not St. Peter's perſon, but his doctrine or conceſſion concerning Chriſt, is the rock upon which the church is built. Scripture is the beſt interpreter: it is not Peter, but Chriſt is the foundation of the church, as here in my Bible you may ſee, by the xxviiith chapter and 16th verſe of Iſaiah, compared with 1 Pet. ii 6, 7, 8, which you may pleaſe to read [which ſhe did] It is moreover expreſsly ſaid, 1 Cor. iii. 11. *Other foundation can no man*

man lay, than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt. And this is the more conſiderable, becauſe he ſpeaks againſt thoſe that made the apoſtles to be the foundation, ſaying, *I am of Paul, another of Apollos, or Cephas*; and if this is ſpoken of Peter, no more is ſaid of him here, than is ſpoken of all the prophets and apoſtles, Eph. ii. 20. *Ye are built upon the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets.*

Deid. Well, I am not much learned in this myſtery; but pray, What as erroneous can you aſſign in our worſhip, or any other thing the church holds, as abſolutely neceſſary?

Gard. The paying divine adoration to angels and ſaints, expreſsly contrary to God's commands, and derogatory to his honor, who alone ought to be worſhipped in heaven and earth; and to worſhip any other, either ſaint or angel, or any creature, is idolatry, and a breach of the ſecond commandment.

Deid. Nay, not too haſtily; we do not worſhip the angels and ſaints as God, with the higheſt worſhip, which is only proper to God; but with an inferior kind of religious worſhip, that they may preſent our ſupplications to him.

Gard. There is no interceſſor or mediator but Chriſt Jeſus, who is appointed to perform that office; if any man wants wiſdom, let him aſk of God, James i. 5 neither of ſaints nor angels. Come to me, ſaith our Saviour, and I will in no wiſe caſt you out. This free invitation

tion ſhews us, he alone was to receive our petitions, and preſent them to his Father. There is alſo image worſhip brought cunningly by prieſts to gain worldly advantage; and pretended miracles, to draw the ignorant to pay their devotion more at one place than at another, impoſed on the ignorant for lucre's ſake. I could ſay much more, but I fear to offend you.

Deid No, you do not: but let us come nearer to the main controverſy. What think you of tranſubſtantiation? Is not Chriſt corporally preſent in the ſacraments?

Gard It is a miſrepreſentation of our Saviour's words; for if he had ſo meant, as the church of Rome holds it, when he broke the bread, he muſt have held himſelf in his own hands, and eat himſelf, yet ſtill ſit whole and entire at the table; his whole body muſt be in the mouth of every communicant at once, and that body in millions of places at one time, broken and unbroken, and be ſubject to putrefaction; and therefore the words, *This is my body*, do intend, *This doth ſignify my body:* and upon the ſame account our Saviour is called a Door, a Rock, a Vine: yet none can be ſo void of underſtanding, to believe he was turned into any of theſe. And therefore, when he broke the bread and gave the cup, he did it only, that when Chriſtian congregations were met on ſolemn occaſions to celebrate his worſhip, they ſhould do it in remembrance of him, 'till his coming

coming in glory at the laſt day, as the immediate words explain; and it is abſurd to believe, that the prieſt's uttering a few words over a wafer, can make it a God, or that body offered on the croſs.

Deid. "You amaze me: but pray, What do you hold about purgatory? Is there ſuch a place, where ſouls are to endure their purgations after death, that go not immediately to heaven, and by maſſes and prayer may be releaſed from it ſooner or later?"

Gard. It is a tradition lately brought in, and with it hath brought much increaſe of wealth to the church. The word of God allows only heaven for thoſe who ſhall be made veſſels of mercy; and hell for thoſe whoſe ſins have provoked him to caſt them down to thoſe diſmal regions of ſorrow and eternal woe; no prayers after death being available.

Deid. "Theſe notions are as new as ſtrange to me: have you any authentic proof of this?"

Gard. Yes, the revealed word of God is ſacred proof beyond all denial: "The rich man in hell lifted up his eyes being in torment, Luke xvi. 23 They ſhall ſit down with Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, but the other ſhall be caſt into utter darkneſs, where ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth, Mat. xxviii. 12. He that believeth ſhall be ſaved, and he that believeth not ſhall be damned," Mat. xxvi. 16. Here is no ſuch thing

thing as a purgatory to be found; it is only the blood of Chriſt that purgeth us from our ſins, and from all uncleanneſs of fleſh and ſpirit, to preſent our ſouls blameleſs and unſpotted to his Father: by this I underſtand thoſe that die in the Lord need not our prayers, and thoſe that die in their ſins no prayers can avail; for in the grave there is no repentance: "As the tree falls, ſo it muſt lie; whether it falls towards the north, or towards the ſouth, where it falls there it muſt lie." There are only two extremes, North and South, no middle way, or purgatory for it to fall in. And as death leaves us, ſo judgment will aſſuredly find us.

He would have proceeded, but ſhe ſtopt him, ſaying, Pray how long have you been of this opinion?

Gard. Ever ſince God was pleaſed to enlighten me with his grace, to be attentive to his holy word, and to be guided by it.

Deid. Was you ever then of the church of Rome?

Gard. In my younger years I was, but through mercy, being made ſenſible by the ſcriptures of the corruptions and errors of that church, by the aſſiſtance of worthy divines, I hope with St. Paul, "Nothing ſhall be able to ſeparate me from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus." I will not offend your ladyſhip's chaſte ears with the hiſtory of the debaucheries and wicked lives of divers popes, and moſt of the

the clergy; but will pray to heaven to defend you from either luſt or revenge. And ſince I have by a free confeſſion put my life into your hands, I humbly ſubmit it to your goodneſs to--

Here again ſhe interrupted him, and demanded, "Why the religion he profeſſed was called the Proteſtant Religion?"

To which he replied, As for being ſo called, it is to diſtinguiſh it from that of the Romiſh: it came from ſeveral princes and cities in Germany, who, upon the preaching of good men, and their exemplary lives, proteſted againſt the uſurpations of the Romiſh church, and its errors. That it was no new doctrine, but the truth of primitive Chriſtianity confeſſed, aſſerted and purged from the corruptions of popery, taking the revealed will of God for its guide.

At this Deidamia pauſed a while; and then taking his Bible, looked over the ſacred proofs he had turned down in order; and her colour went and came ſo, that he eaſily perceived her mind was labouring under ſome difficulties; and ſo giving it him again, ſhe went away without ſpeaking one word.

This ſomewhat perplexed the gardener, as fearing ſhe was diſpleaſed with what he had ſaid; but her ſending for him privately into her chamber the next morning, under the notion of bringing her ſome choice flowers, baniſhed all fear in him; and, when being left together, ſhe gently led him into the cloſet, and

ſhutting

ſhutting the door, to be more private, ſaid, Bernard, (fetching a deep ſigh) your yeſterday's diſcourſe has much broken my laſt night's reſt; I have been meditating on it, and I find abundance of reaſon in what you ſay; you have, as St. Paul ſaid in another caſe, almoſt perſuaded me to be of your perſuaſion. I wiſh to God, moſt virtuous lady, replied he, I might be an humble inſtrument in God's hand, to do any thing that may redound to his glory, and the good and welfare of your precious and immortal ſoul, without hazarding your temporal quiet and peace, or expoſing you to any danger; though for a crown of life and immortality, all earthly things are to be deſpiſed; and the holy apoſtle accounts all this world's good but as droſs and dung in compariſon of enjoying Chriſt Jeſus. Well, ſaid ſhe, this is my aim, and if God enables me with his aſſiſting grace, I hope, through his mercy, to attain it. I have, indeed, continued ſhe, to my grief, obſerved the looſe and profane manner of living of thoſe that profeſs our religion; alledging, That a confeſſion, with abſolution, and ſome other works, will purge them from their ſins, and gain them that bleſſedneſs in the end, which I could never heartily believe they would obtain by them: and ſince I have more ſeriouſly conſidered God's word expreſsly to the contrary, I cannot believe that any thing but ſincere and unfeigned repentance, in the courſe

of

of an unſpotted life, can purchaſe (through the merits of my Saviour) thoſe glories and tranſcendent bleſſings that God hath promiſed to poor mortals.——She would have proceeded, but the falling tears ſtopt her utterance, and Bernard had an inward rejoicing to ſee her brought to this paſs; whereupon he comforted her with good advice, and the cordials of God's mercies and promiſes. In brief, he had made her ſenſible of the errors ſhe had been brought up in, and then opened from point to point, the cheat of pretended miracles and relics, the impoſing on people with pardon and indulgence to get money, the whoredoms, murders and inceſts of many popes, cardinals and prelates of the Romiſh church; their unreaſonableneſs in prohibiting prieſts marriage, which is immediately appointed by God, and the allowing them, by canons and decrees, the embraces of concubines, or to commit adultery, expreſsly contrary to the command of the Almighty, for as much as he has expreſsly ſaid, *Thoſe that do theſe things ſhall not inherit eternal Life.*—— He would have proceeded, but hearing the ſound of feet coming up ſtairs, ſhe haſted him down a back way, with ſo much precipitation, that he left his Bible behind him, which ſhe luckily ſeeing, locked up in a ſcrutore.

I have told you before, that father Antonio the prieſt, forgetting his function, duty and diſtance, gave way to his unruly and lawleſs paſſion,

paſſion, and was then blundering up ſtairs to find her in private, having almoſt fluſtered himſelf with wine, on purpoſe either to be more confident in his wicked deſign, to tell her the ſtory of his nauſeous love, or rather luſt; or that, if he were reproved, he might have ſome ſlender excuſe for his impertinency, and lay (as too many do) the blame of their folly on that which is rather an aggravation of their crime, *i. e.* their drunkenneſs; and ſo ſurpriſed however he came, that putting his noſe over the upper ſtep, juſt as the gardener poſted out at the private door, he had a glimpſe of the back-parts of his garments, as it afterwards appeared; but at that time took no notice of any ſuch thing. Deidamia ſeeing Antonio coming towards her in a very pleaſant humour, demanded with a modeſt decency, what occaſion brought him thither to diſturb her retirement?

Ah! (ſaid the impudent prieſt, who could not long keep down his boiling paſſion) "Your two fair eyes, ſweet lady, like loadſtones, have drawn me to you; that beauteous tempting face of yours has made me forget myſelf, with my duty to my Lord, and the truſt he repoſed in me." Why certainly, (ſaid Deidamia, calling in patience to bridle in her paſſion) you are beſide yourſelf, Antonio.—What mean you by this kind of diſcourſe? "If I am beſide myſelf (replyed he, almoſt crying) your fair ſelf is the cauſe of it, whoſe beauty, like arrows, has

wounded my heart, and ſickened my brain; I wiſh I had never ſeen ſuch an amiableneſs in womankind; but ſince I have been ſo unfortunate as to be your fettered captive, take ſome compaſſion on me, and eaſe my ſufferings." What ſufferings? replied Deidamia, frowning, or what can be the ſenſe of all this looſe ſtuff? "Why then, replied he, to be ſerious, in plain terms, I love you, and that ſo paſſionately, that unleſs you condeſcend to make me ſuitable returns, I ſhall have no peace or quiet; but muſt be miſerable and wretched eternally." Then, ſaid ſhe, be you ſo: What have you ſeen of any looſe miſbecoming behaviour in me, that you ſhould dare to ſpeak thus to me? This, like a thunder-bolt, ſtruck him mute; when ſmoothing her brows, and growing a little calmer, ſhe ſaid, Come, come, Antonio, I took you for another man; you profeſs ſanctity, and admoniſh others to lead a holy life; is this pretenſion then real, or is it only feigned to try my virtue? I proteſt, ſaid he, holding up both his hands, it is real, and I cannot help it. Why, ſaid ſhe, would you commit ſo great a wickedneſs if you might, and make yourſelf guilty of a crime ſo henious?' Ah! lady, replied he, if that be all, I can abſolve you by the power given me by the ſee of Rome; conſent, and let me enjoy you, your penance ſhall be always eaſy; I'll get a diſpenſation for your marriage vows from the Pope, with pardon, indulgencies

or

or any thing, for ſins paſt, and thoſe that are to come: Nay, I'll do any thing, ſo I do not fall under your diſpleaſure: Let me alone for the reſt, and——"

This inſolence ſo much diſpleaſed the virtuous lady, that ſhe could hear no more, nor bear it any longer; but commanded him out of her preſence: Yet could not be rid of him till ſhe threatened to call up the reſt of her ſervants. Whereupon he went muttering away; and for two days after, as much as poſſible he could, he ſhunned coming into her preſence; which much pleaſed her; for ſhe could not behold him, but with horror and deteſtation.

This attempt however, in one ſenſe, through the over-ruling providence and goodneſs of God, who is wonderful in counſel, and excellent in working, and can make the greateſt wickedneſs of his creatures ſerve the purpoſe of his own glory (worked to her advantage; for ſhe believed now all true which the gardener had told her, about the wicked debauched lives of the Romiſh clergy, ſince this villainous prieſt had not ſcrupled to proffer the Pope's pardon for no leſs than adultery, and that before it was committed; by which means or encouragement ſhe plainly ſaw it muſt conſequently be that they frequently tempted eaſy and ignorant people to the commiſſion of many ſins: Therefore ſhe reſolved to leave theſe blind guides, and take the word of God for her leader and inſtructor;

forbearing to come to confeſſion, or hear maſs ſometimes upon pretence of indiſpoſition, and at other times purpoſely by going abroad, at the uſual times of either; and holding ſome other conferences with the gardener, which (as to particulars) for brevity's ſake I muſt of neceſſity paſs over.

She found in herſelf a ſtrange averſion to the religion ſhe had been brought up in; and having procured a Bible in the French tongue, took ſuch delight in reading it, that whenever ſhe had time to retire, it was not out of her hand; yet ſhe kept this as ſecret as poſſible; and not being ready at it herſelf, got the gardener to turn her down ſuch proofs as were the ſtrongeſt arguments againſt the errors of popery, and where the abominations of the myſtical Babylon were pointed at. This he joyfully did, and gave praiſe to God who had made him inſtrumental in ſo good a work; though he was not ignorant his life was liable to pay for it, if it were diſcovered. She likewiſe laid aſide her beads and crucifix, converſed no more with roſaries, or the legends of pretended ſaints; and though ſhe found ſome temptations and fears at the beginning, yet frequently praying to God, ſhe overcame Satan's wiles, and found abundance of joy and comfort enlightening her ſoul, ſo that ſhe could not forbear breaking out into raptures of praiſe and thankſgiving for the wonderful

wonderful change, (by ſo ſtrange and unexpected means) wrought in her ſoul.

Whilſt this virtuous lady and the gardener held their private correſpondence, in diſcourſing of the things of God, and encouraging and exhorting each other to perſeverance and ſtedfaſtneſs in the truth, Antonio and Fronovius, equally burning with luſtful deſire to enjoy the tender beauties of the fair Deidamia, were plotting and contriving how their lawleſs deſigns might beſt be brought about (tho' each plotted by himſelf, for as yet they were ignorant of each others paſſion.) The villainous prieſt (as you have already heard) had been repulſed with indignation by the chaſte lady, which inwardly tormented him, and brought him almoſt to his wit's end; but the other (Fronovius) had made no trial of her virtue, and wanted a favourable opportunity to do it; and therefore he thinks, meditates, and caſts many things in his mind, till at laſt, his paſſion emboldening him, he was reſolved to break the ice with a letter; and if ſhe took no notice of that, to ſecond it with a perſonal addreſs: But how he ſhould do this with privacy and ſafety, he was at a ſtand for a time; for he feared to truſt any body to deliver it, leſt his criminal love ſhould take air: and to deliver it himſelf, would look too daſtardly, as if he was not capable, or, at leaſt, durſt not ſpeak for himſelf; however,

in a little while, he met with a fit opportunity; for Deidamia accidentally dropping her handkerchief, as ſhe paſſed through a large gallery that led to her apartment, he careſully took it up, and folding up his letter in it, which he had ready ſealed by him, he gave it to her gentlewoman to give it to her lady, telling her he found it in the long gallery. The gentlewoman knowing the handkerchief to be her lady's, immediately carried it to her, who received it from her, without knowing any thing of a letter being in it; and afterward accidentally taking the handkerchief out of her pocket, the letter dropt out upon the ground, which ſhe taking up, and looking upon the ſuperſcription, was extremely ſurpriſed to find it directed to herſelf; and haſtily opening it, was much more ſo to find the contents thereof as followeth:

PARDON me, moſt lovely Deidamia, if your beauty makes me forget the ſtation I am in, and emboldens me to own a paſſion I have laboured in vain to hide. To be brief, dear Lady, I am ſo captivated by your charms and ſingular perfections, that I am conſtrained to ſay, I love you infinitely above all mortal creatures; and ſince it appears to me unreaſonable, that any one man ſhould monopolize ſo ineſtimable a treaſure, give me leave to hope, and don't ſuffer me to languiſh and die, but render the balm of your kindneſs to

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cure the wounds which your bright eyes have made in your otherwiſe wretched ſervant,

FRONOVIUS.

The reading of this letter filled her with bluſhes, anger and amazement, at the unparalleled boldneſs and villainy of the author of it, and at firſt ſhe was reſolved to commit it to the flames, or to tear it in pieces, but upon ſecond thoughts, ſhe laid it up in her cloſet, where ſhe vexed and freted herſelf that ſhe was thus left among ſuch ungrateful wretches, that dared ſo much to ſuſpect her virtues, and meaſure them by their own wicked and filthy inclinations, as to preſume ſhe would defile her marriage-bed; being more grieved for this diſcovery than the former: for ſhe knew the prieſt had ſomething of the *Libertine* in him, but this man ſhe had held to be honeſt and virtuouſly inclined till now: and to him ſhe thought to have diſcovered Antonio's folly, if he perſiſted in it, that by ſhame and reproofs he might have reclaimed him. But now ſhe ſcarce knew whom to truſt; and could not therefore but tremble at the apprehenſions of ſome violence that might be offered her from thoſe luſtful miſcreants, whoſe ſight now very much diſpleaſed her. She thought once or twice of diſplacing them; but found their authority in the family was ſo great, that in her lord's abſence ſhe could not do it; whereupon ſhe fell upon her knees to implore God's

God's mercy and protection, commending herſelf wholly to his care and providence, and begging of him to be her guardian and protector.

Though Deidamia's mind, on thoſe ſurpriſing attempts of her honor, was variouſly toſſed, till at laſt ſhe came to a ſettled reſolution prudently to conceal what had paſſed, at leaſt till her lord came home, for fear of ſcandal and diſturbance: yet Fronovious might well read in her countenance, whenever he came into her preſence, that ſhe had read his letter, and how ſhe reſented it; which made him ſtruggle to overcome his paſſion, but in vain; for, like oil thrown on fire, the oppoſition his lewd deſires met with, made him burn the fiercer; ſo that he reſolved to find an opportunity to throw himſelf at her feet, and diſcover his paſſion to her by word of mouth; and whilſt he waited for a convenient time and place to do it, he perceived the gardener often to go in and out very chearful, as highly pleaſed and contented; and that though he only carried her fruits and flowers, yet his frantic paſſion and jealouſy, made him believe there was ſomething more in it. Antonio the prieſt had alſo obſerved the like, and had much the ſame ſentiments, which emboldened them the more to perſiſt in their wicked and unclean deſires, and to continue to perſecute the chaſte lady with their deteſted proffers of lawleſs love; concluding, that if one of

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ſo low rank could be in favour, they in time could not miſs of obtaining what they ſought; and ſo blinded with paſſion, and purſuing what they aimed at, (though, as has been ſaid, unknown to each other) they kept a watchful eye over the actions of Deidamia; whoſe mind was taken up in contemplating the divine perfections of him, who is fairer than the children of men, being every day more confirmed in the truth of her religion, bleſſing and praiſing God, that by ſo wonderful and unexpected a means had brought her out of darkneſs and errors, into the marvellous light of his truth, and engaged her heart to embrace and entertain it above her chief joy; partly looking on the trouble ſhe had from Antonio and Fronovius, thoſe brethren in iniquity, as temptations or trials to confirm her the more, by over coming them, in the doctrine ſhe had ſo lately embraced; in which ſhe firmly reſolved to perſevere againſt all temptations whatever.

But whilſt theſe things paſſed, Fronovius had received no other anſwer to his letter but Deidamia's angry and much changed countenance towards him, which he would not take for an abſolute repulſe, and therefore was reſolved to have her poſitive anſwer. To obtain which, as Deidamia was one morning leaning upon the window in her chamber, and looking into the garden, he ſtole ſoftly up ſtairs, and was got into her chamber, juſt behind her, before ſhe heard

heard him, when ſuddenly turning about, and ſeeing him in a dejected poſture, ſhe was very much ſurpriſed, and trembled at the ſight, whilſt he by many words endeavoured to ſhew the greatneſs of his paſſion; but having ſomewhat recollected her ſpirits, ſhe, with an angry countenance, ſpake to him thus: "Why, how now, Fronovius? what buſineſs have you here, thus to ſteal into my chamber unawares? This is ſuch an affront, a piece of impudence and rudeneſs as better becomes a thief than the ſteward of my houſhold; and yet the filthy errand that you come on, is far more criminal than your coming. What have you ever ſeen of lightneſs in my carriage, that ſhould make you thus audacious, or give you the leaſt hope to ſucceed in your unlawful and wicked deſires? I command you to be gone: and know, that if you perſiſt in your impudence and folly, I will ſpeedily take thoſe methods, that ſhall iſſue in your deſerved ſhame and confuſion."

He would have replied, but ſhe forthwith went out of her chamber, and would not hear him.

This abſolute denial, and ſevere reprimand, filled Fronovius with confuſion, and almoſt made him hopeleſs; but, after ſome reflection, he ſtrongly fancied, that the oppoſition he met with proceeded not from the lady's virtue, but from the greater inclination ſhe had to ſome rival, who enjoyed thoſe favours which he had been

een purſuing; and he ſuppoſed the gardener o be the man, becauſe he had received ſome narks of her favor ſince the departure of the Count Alanſon. Being thus perſuaded, he was eſolved, if it were poſſible, to make a plain iſcovery: and to this end, he planted himſelf rivately one evening near the back-ſtairs that ed out of the garden to Deidamia's apartment for that way he thought his ſuppoſed rival uſt come.) And indeed he had not waited ong, before a perſon came by, and went up hoſe ſtairs, whom he ſoftly followed to the tair's foot: the darkneſs of the night hindered im from diſcerning who the perſon was that vent by him; but he doubted not but it was he gardener: and having liſtened at the bottom of the ſtairs, hearing no door open, nor ny key to turn, he imagined the door was left pen on purpoſe, and therefore reſolved to go up himſelf, and ſurprize them in the very act of their unlawful love. He had no ſooner reſolved thus, but he heard ſomebody coming ſoftly down ſtairs: as ſoon as the perſon came to the bottom of the ſtairs, Fronovius boldly ſeizes on him, and demanded what buſineſs he had there at that late time of night; but was extremely ſurprized to meet with, inſtead of Bernard the gardener, Antonio the prieſt, who then Fronovius thought had been with Deidamia. Upon which, ſpeaking big words to Antonio, and threatening to kill him for the diſhonor he had done

done his lord, in violating his bed, the poor prieſt, (who was almoſt dead with fear, and extremely confounded at this accident) trembling, told Fronovius, that if he would ſave his life, he would ingenuouſly tell him all he knew; which Fronovius promiſing, Antonio told him the ſtory of his love addreſſes, violent paſſion, and the repulſes he met with. That, however, being jealous of the gardener, and not finding him in his lodgings, (for it ſeems Deidamia had newly appointed him another unknown to Antonio) he ſuſpected he might be with his lady; where deſiring to detect him, and bring him to puniſhment, he had undertaken to come at this unſeaſonable time; but the doors being faſt locked, and after a long liſtening, hearing no ſtir nor whiſpering, was returning back again to watch a more favourable opportunity, that he might not on ſlight ground or uncertainty, lay ſuch a thing to their charge.

Fronovius finding the prieſt had been repulſed and reproved as well as he, and that his thoughts were the ſame with his as to the ſuſpected rival, having huſhed his preſent fears, and declared to him, tho' ſomewhat darkly, his own affections, *&c.* they went to Antonio's chamber, where they entered into a combination ſo helliſh and malicious, that it brought many woes and miſeries both to the virtuous Deidamia and the gardener; till, by the mercy of God, to the ſhame and confuſion of the contrivers,

ontrivers, they were turned to bleſſings, to ejoice the injured, and to clear their inno-ence, after many inexpreſſible ſufferings.

Whilſt theſe wicked men were thus plotting o revenge their repulſes, Deidamia was thought-ul of her ſafety. Sometimes ſhe determined o write to Alanſon, to remember his promiſe, nd haſten his return: but then ſhe concluded, hat though his preſence might reform theſe iſorders, yet to deſert his command upon any rivate occaſion, would derogate from his ho-our: and then ſhe conſidered that ſhe could ot hide from him the religion ſhe had embrac-d ſince his departure, for ſhe could not diſſem-le, if ſhe was taxed with it; and though his ompany was dear to her, yet the enjoyment of he other, was more precious and preferable: nd that, in compariſon of the love of Chriſt, ll the love in the world was but of little value. t another time, ſhe thought of retiring to her arents: but this ſhe fancied might be diſplea-ing to her lord, that in his abſence, ſhe would eave the government of his family, which he ad truſted to her care at his departure; theſe hings being ſeriouſly weighed, ſhe reſolved to emain at home, thinking time would cure he wild diſorders that were in the minds of hoſe two wicked ſervants.

After this laſt reſolve, ſhe retired to her clo-et, where ſhe had not been long ere the gar-lener came to preſent her with a paper he had drawn

drawn up by her order, of the fundament
points of the proteſtant religion, in oppoſitio
to popery, one being compared with the othe
and tried by ſcripture and the fathers of the pri
mitive times: ſhe accepted this paper very kind
ly, promiſing to look it over at leiſure, as
matter ſhe had much deſired to be informed in
Whereupon he retired to his labour in the gar
den, whilſt a bribed ſpy their enemies had ſe
on the watch, was running to give informatio
of the gardener's being with the lady. Frono
vius was out of the way; Antonio haſted a
faſt as he could, and ſoftly opening the ſpring
lock, impudently entered the chamber, draw
ing the curtains of her bed, in hopes of find
ing what he looked for there; but miſſing hi
purpoſe, he ſtole to the ſide of her cloſet, di
rected thither by her voice; for the pious lad
was fallen on her knees, and fervently pourin
out her ſoul to God in theſe words.

O Moſt bleſſed God! who art the Father o
mercies, and the God of all conſolation
I bleſs and praiſe thy holy name, that thou ha
enlightened the eyes of my underſtanding wit
the knowledge of thy bleſſed truth, and tha
thou haſt delivered me from the darkneſs an
ignorance, and theſe antichriſtian errors, where
in I have lived ſince my childhood, and ha
revealed the ſaving knowledge of thy will unt
me, as it is contained in thy bleſſed word, th
holy

holy ſcriptures. O ſtrengthen my heart in the profeſſion of thy truth, and grant that I may never return back again to the popiſh idolatry and ſuperſtition, nor be under the conduct of thoſe blind guides any more, whatever ſufferings and trials I may be liable to, or may undergo on that account.

Theſe pious breathings of her ſoul, Antonio to his great amazement heard, and knew not what to think, whether he ſhould diſcover himſelf, or retire: but at laſt, wickedly ſuppoſing the fear ſhe would conceive, leſt he ſhould diſcover what ſhe had uttered againſt the Romiſh religion, or that, as he concluded, ſhe was an Hugonot, as they call proteſtants, might induce her to comply with his luſt, he preſented himſelf before her, rudely opening her cloſet door ere ſhe had time to riſe from her knees. This continued impudence of his much troubled her ſpirits; whereupon, riſing haſtily, ſhe forcibly pulled the door, after ſhe had given him a thruſt back and locked herſelf in. However, it unhappily fell out, that in this diſorder, not taking that care as at another time ſhe would have done, that paper which the gardener had newly brought her, with her too haſty ſhutting the door, dropped out of her coat, and unperceived by her, was ſhut out of the cloſet, which Antonio took carefully up, and put it in his pocket, telling her, though the door was ſhut againſt

againſt him, he had heard how ſhe had apoſtatized from her religion, and how wickedly ſhe had ſpoken of the holy Roman Catholic church, and what miſchiefs he could do her if he ſhould diſcover it; yet for the love he bore her, if ſhe would yield to eaſe his paſſion, it ſhould be buried in eternal oblivion: but if ſhe refuſed, he had now got an opportunity to ruin her.

The pious lady (whoſe fervent devotions this wretch had interrupted) bridled as much as human frailty could do, her paſſion, commanded him with mild terms, to be gone, and not wound her chaſte ears with his hated diſcourſe. Againſt the injury he threatened her, ſhe truſted in God for protection, who is a ſtrong tower for the ſafety of all thoſe that fly to him; and ſhe doubted not, when ſhe had an opportunity to make her lord ſenſible of it, he would thro' the favour of Almighty God, concur with her in her opinion.

Antonio finding himſelf diſappointed in his main expectation, and thoroughly nettled with this anſwer, particularly the concluſion of it, went away threatning and muttering to himſelf; and in the anti-chamber met Fronovius, who upon later notice was haſtening to him, to whom he told all he had ſeen and heard. This made them conſult to take new meaſures; and in concluſion reſolved her chaſtity or life ſhould be ſacrificed to their revenge. This was no ſooner concluded on, but Antonio remembered

that

hat paper he had taken up, and taking it out of his pocket, knew it to be the gardener's hand, and at firſt ſuppoſed it to be a love-letter, that might diſcover the intrigue between him and his lady, was highly pleaſed; but he had ſcarce read it half over, ere he found ſuch weighty arguments againſt the church of Rome, levelled ſo directly againſt her tottering foundation, as not only puzzled his underſtanding, but made him ſtorm at a ſtrange rate: whereupon Fronovius took it out of his hand, and read the reſt, and in the cloſe, theſe words, viz. Virtuous lady, theſe arguments, *pro & contra*, I ſubmit to your great wiſdom. being very joyful in having, under God, been a poor inſtrument in enlightening your underſtanding to diſcern truth from falſehood.

This left them no longer in doubt, who the party was that (as they termed it) had induced her to apoſtatize, and become an heretic, and for this, conſequently, to enjoy favours ſhe denied to them; whereupon they vowed a bloody revenge. But fearing that the love Alanſon bore her, would not be effaced by the change of her religion, eſpecially when he ſhould come to underſtand their criminal paſſion for her, and practices againſt her, they reſolved to make her parents bear the blame of that ſtupendous wickedneſs, which they themſelves deſigned to be the actors of: for they knew that her parents were extraordinarily bigotted to the Romiſh

church, and ſo were the likelieſt to deal with in this matter: whereupon Antonio immediately poſted to them, and deſiring a private conference with the father and mother, after many hypocritical ſhews of ſorrow, for the diſgrace that would befal the family, he declared how his lady (ſince his lord had been abſent had been perverted from the catholic religion, by a Hugonot, a heretic gardener, a fugitive wretch that had been taken in, ſome years ago, upon charity. He urged what diſhonor it would be to their family; the danger incurred by the king's edicts; and laſtly, the loſs of her ſoul, if ſhe was not timely recovered and brought to the right fold, from whence ſhe had perverſely ſtrayed. Then he began to magnify the pious care and pains he had taken to keep her in the right way, and to prevent her falling into ſuch an unpardonable ſin; but that the devil had been too hard for his induſtry and labours, through God's high ſufferance, to bring ſome great judgment on her, for her haughtineſs and contempt, &c.

This being delivered in a tone very moving and paſſionate, ſeeming altogether in pity to Deidamia, made her father ſigh, and the old lady burſt out in tears, wringing her hands and bewailing the miſeries of their aged years, in this (as they then termed it) worſt of misfortunes that could befal them; that the only branch of their family, that ſhould convey it to poſterity,

poſterity, had made herſelf a caſt-away; for ſo in their paſſionate mood, they expreſſed her to be. Antonio was glad to ſee them thus wrought upon; and the ſtorm of their firſt grief ſpending itſelf, and being allayed by falling tears, they began to conſult more maturely how this misfortune might be reverſed; and after many things were debated, Antonio's advice of lodging her in a nunnery (where ſhe might be reſtrained from heretic books as he ſaid, and the company of any ſeducers, and alſo be inſtructed by virtuous nuns, till her lord came home, and determined what might farther be done in it) was approved.

What was to be done with the gardener was the thing to be conſulted, whether to make him away ſecretly, or deliver him up to juſtice; the prieſt was for the former, but the parent's conſciences were tender in that, and could not conſent to ſuch wickedneſs; but Antonio alledged, that the whole buſineſs would be made public, if he were delivered up to juſtice, and their daughter would be brought in as criminal, and perhaps for her obſtinacy, her lord might loſe his honors and preferments at court. This made them conſider farther, and at laſt left it to the wicked prieſt or thoſe he ſhould appoint, to do as he or they pleaſed. They would have bore him company to Alanſon's houſe, to ſee what their perſuaſions might do, but he urged it would only be a means to diſcover the mat-

ter; and that it would be the beſtfor them to come and moderate things when the Count came home, of which he would give them the firſt notice; ſince at preſent what was to be done required ſecrecy, that in the mean time ſhe would be provided for, as became her quality; and that ſuch a place as he mentioned, with time and company, were the beſt cure to joſtle thoſe wild notions out of her head. Upon which they only ſent her a letter, and reſolved not to go themſelves. So Antonio returned well ſatisfied to his wicked companion.

Deidamia (who was ignorant of this) miſſing her paper, and not doubting which way it went, taking more care for Bernard the gardener than herſelf, thought by it he would be diſcovered; wherefore ſhe ſent for him, gave him a handful of gold, and commanded him to ſhift for himſelf; telling him what had paſſed and the danger he was in. This command he ſeemed exceeding loth to obey, and with tears in his eyes proteſted, that for the ſake of his religion, and in her defence againſt any injury or violence, he was willing to expoſe his life; but ſhe urged ſo many things to haſten his departure, that he promiſed to do it; and ſo they (with ſhedding many tears) took a long farewell of each other.

Bernard was preparing to depart, as Antonio returned with his orders; whereupon Fronovius clapt him up in a dungeon, and that night hired

hired two ruffians to carry him to the ſea-cliffs, and throw him thence headlong; and thither they carried him in a ſack on a horſe, gagged and bound; but finding a veſſel thruſt into a creek very near the cliffs, one of them enquired and found it belonged to a French plantation in the Weſt-Indies: whereupon they took the method of Joſeph's brethren with the Iſhmaelites, to make the beſt purchaſe of him, rather than deſtroy him and loſe it; ſo he that came to enquire, demanded of the maſter if he wanted a luſty ſervant? he told him, yes; then he returned and took the gardener out of the ſack, ungagged and unbound him, and told him, That though he deſerved to die for perverting his lady to hereſy, yet they had compaſſion on him, and would only ſend him to do penance as a ſlave, in the Weſt-Indies, and bid him accept of it thankfully, and without muttering; and whereupon they delivered him to the maſter of the veſſel, of whom they received twelve crowns. After which they returned, and gave an account they had thrown him with a great ſtone about his neck, from a fifty feet cliff into the ſea, and for it received the reward promiſed him. Nor was Bernard unwilling to go with his new maſter, finding providence had changed the death that was deſigned him, only into ſlavery, from whence he might hope in time to be releaſed. But his care was greater for Deidamia than himſelf; for he had been

uſed to misfortunes, and inured to ſeveral hardſhips. And her grief was no leſs, that ſhe found herſelf conſtrained (as ſhe ſuppoſed for his ſafety) ſo abruptly to part with the man that had been an inſtrument in the filling her heart ſo full of heavenly conſolations; and had not laid her commands on him to write to her, or otherwiſe to give ſecret notice of his abiding place (that ſhe might have had farther converſe with him, and been more ſtrengthened by him in the profeſſion of that truth he had inſtructed her in, and which ſhe was determined to abide by) till ſhe found means to reſtore him to his place again.

Whilſt ſhe was penſive on theſe thoughts, Antonio having (as I before told you) got a letter from her parents to her, wherein they laid their commands on her till her lord's return, "as ſhe tendered the favor of Almighty God, their bleſſing, and her own honor and ſafety, to be ruled and guided in all things by her ſpiritual paſtor." (So, being ignorant of his villainy, they termed this wicked prieſt.) "And whatever he perſuaded her to for the good of her ſoul and bodily preſervation, readily to comply with; to whoſe care and integrity, next to the heavenly protection, they heartily recommended her till her lord and huſband came home." This was ſigned by both of them. And Antonio having conſulted Fronovius about it, they both came boldly to her apartment, when

when they knew ſhe was in private, and preſented it to her, "Charging her to obey it as ſhe tendered her ſafety." She no ſooner looked on it, but ſhe aſked them ſo many queſtions, that by Antonio's replies, ſhe was not inſenſible they had traduced her to her parents; and after ſome juſt reproaches, told them, "It ſhould not be long before ſhe would go and plead her own cauſe, and doubted not ſo to juſtify her proceeding to her parents, that the black villainy of her baſe and treacherous accuſers, ſhould be unable to ſully the brightneſs of her innocence." This at firſt ſtartled them; but being fully reſolved to proceed in their wicked deſigns, they plainly told her, "She was at their diſpoſal, and that they had orders to carry her to a nunnery, where ſhe would be honorably uſed, but debarred from the deſtructive principles ſhe had lately imbibed, till her and their lord returned, to take the matter into his own hands, and determine how he pleaſed to diſpoſe of her."

This inſufferable impudence of theſe luſtful wretches, ſtirred up her zeal to ſo much holy anger, and deteſtation of what they propoſed, that ſhe in a great paſſion proteſted, "To die a thouſand deaths, if it were poſſible, and by the moſt exquiſite torments their helliſh malice could invent, rather than to be incloſed within the walls of a nunnery, which ſhe was ſatisfied was no more than a ſink of ſin, and plauſible colour

colour for lewdneſs and debauchery." But they, without replying, offering to force her from her cloſet, ſhe oppoſed her ſtrength againſt their rudeneſs, crying out for help to the reſt of her ſervants; but Fronovius, who was the ſteward and governor of the family, had ſo ordered the matter, that thoſe that immediately waited upon her, were then out of hearing; ſo that without any other interruption than what her contending gave them, they hurried her into a cloſe chamber in the remoteſt part of the houſe, where they locked her in, and went to conſult farther, how they ſhould ſecretly convey her from thence, whilſt ſhe (who expected after ſuch treatment, nothing but a violation of her chaſtity, and would much rather have embraced death, and counted it a favor) was pouring out her ſoul to God, and imploring his help in this needful time of her trouble; and begging of him to ſtrengthen her faith, till on a ſudden, to allay the trouble and afflictions of her mind, ſuch beams of joy and comfort darted into her ſoul, that ſhe aſſured herſelf, "That that merciful God, whoſe gracious protection ſhe had been ſeeking, would work out deliverance for her in due time."

Theſe conſpirators by this time, had come to a reſult to rid themſelves as they thought, for ever from the fears they were in, of their villainous practices being diſcovered: which was thus.

Fronovius

Fronovius counterfeited a letter in Alanſon's hand ſo very exactly, that if himſelf had ſeen it, he might have been puzzled to diſtinguiſh it from his own; and having gotten two ruffians ready, one dreſſed in the habit of an officer, and the other like a ſervant attending him, Antonio and his companion in wickedneſs went to her with it, and falling on their knees, with ſome forced tears, humbly implored her pardon for the indignities they had offered to her, beſeeching her to be their good lady, notwithſtanding their follies, and they would never in the like manner offend, nor do any thing to diſoblige her; with many other proteſtations and much feigned ſorrow for their rudeneſs and deſigns upon her chaſtity, entreating her not to diſcover it to her lord.

Whilſt Deidamia was wondering what that ſudden alteration, in thoſe who had lately ſo rudely treated her might mean; Fronovius delivered her the letter, in which ſhe read theſe words.

My dear DEIDAMIA,

" THOUGH I know that the news which
" theſe lines will acquaint you with,
" cannot be acceptable to you, yet conjure you
" by our mutual affections, that you ſuffer not
" yourſelf to be diſturbed, but hear what I ſhall
" tell you, with that patience and ſerenity
" of mind which becomes you, as knowing it

" is

" is our duty in all things that happen to us,
" to ſubmit to the divine will. Know then,
" my lovely Deidamia, that in a late encoun-
" ter with a party of the enemies, I happened
" to be wounded by a chance ſhot, which my
" ſurgeon tells me is mortal; and fearing that
" it may be ſo, and deſiring above all things
" here below, to have a ſight of your dear ſelf
" before I depart out of the world, I have ſent
" the bearer, Monſ. Durell, one of my cap-
" tains, to conduct you to me forthwith, who
" is a perſon of that worth and honor, that
" you may truſt yourſelf with him without the
" trouble of any attendance, but what he brings
" with him, becauſe I would have you come as
" ſpeedily as may be; which is at preſent, all
" from him who is both in life and death,

Your ever faithful huſband,

Charleroy,
July 12, 1639. } DE ALANSON.

At the reading of this ſhe trembled, looked pale, and ſhed abundance of tears, being in the greateſt diſorder and confuſion imaginable; intreating inſtantly to ſee the party that brought it; promiſing (on their renewing their intreaties) not to diſcover their wickedneſs, if by their future demeanor they made an amendment for what

what had paſſed; and they thereupon ſolemnly promiſed, and led her down into the hall, where the pretended captain and his ſervant bowed very low to her; and being beforehand inſtructed, anſwered all her queſtions ſo cunningly, that ſhe verily believed the letter to come from her lord, and that all he ſaid was true, deſiring them to refreſh themſelves, whilſt ſhe fitted herſelf with other apparel, and took ſome jewels, gold, &c. along with her. Which done, and being about four in the evening, the innocent dove committed herſelf to the talons of theſe bloody vultures, mounted behind the ſuppoſed captain, who had his inſtructions not to let her ſee the next morning dawn. Antonio and Fronovius pretended much ſorrow at her departure, but inwardly rejoiced, that by this ſtratagem, they could get her eaſily into the trap, without noiſe or diſturbance; which had they gone about to do by force, her cries might have brought riſcue and prevented their villainous purpoſes. The curſed prieſt indeed would have firſt raviſhed her by himſelf and his companion, and then murdered her at home; but the other conſidering that it would be difficult to diſpoſe of the body, contrived this way. But I muſt leave them for ſome time hugging themſelves in their ſecurity, and follow the deceived innocent,

The bloody cut-throats having got the prize by her too much credulity into their poſſeſſion, took

took all the by-ways they could, croſſing the country, and holding her in diſcourſe with many things relating to the war, and ſo ſpun out the time till the ſun was near ſetting, when coming into a valley between two vaſt woods, in a place much unfrequented, they rode into one of them, at a turning of a narrow way, where the ſuppoſed captain ſtopped, and the ruffian that rode ſingle, alighted, and ſuddenly pulled Deidamia from behind him, who at ſo unexpected a rudeneſs, trembled and began to ſuſpect the treachery; nor was the other ſlow in diſmounting, when they carried her farther into the wood; upon this, with piteous ſhrieks and cries, ſhe demanded the cauſe of ſuch violence; but without replying, the villain who had carried her, drawing his ſword, directed it for the fatal thruſt, deſigning inſtantly to pierce her heart; whilſt on her knees ſhe was imploring their pity and compaſſion, and intreating to know in what ſhe had offended to make them, ſo void of humanity towards a diſtreſſed lady, whom they had betrayed into that ſolitary place; being convinced that her lord had given no ſuch commands. No, replied they, that's true, nor do we know him; but Antonio and Fronovius have, and we muſt obey them; beſides, you are an heretic, and ought not to live.

Deidamia now finding ſhe was betrayed by her wicked ſervants into the hands of theſe mercileſs villains; and ſeeing nothing but preſent death

death before her eyes, ſhe poured out her ſoul to God in vehement petitions for favour from his hands; and that if he ſaw fit ſhe ſhould live no longer here, that he would receive her into life eternal; and that rather, if it were required, ſhe might ſeal her profeſſion of the reformed religion, in which ſhe had found ſo much heavenly conſolation, with her deareſt blood, than be prevailed with to recant it. But thou, O Lord, ſaid ſhe, who deliveredſt Daniel from the fury of the lions, and the three children from devouring flames, canſt, if thou wilt, in this extremity, deliver me from theſe blood-thirſty men, whom I have in no manner injured: but be it as thou pleaſeſt, ſo that my departing ſoul, when it leaves this mortal body may find ſhelter in the arms of thy mercy. The villains, who all this while had eyed her, and ſaw her lovely in her tears, troubled not themſelves about her religion, for their buſineſs was to murder her; and therefore the pretended captain ſaid, "Lady! our time is ſhort, this inſtant you muſt die, therefore ſettle your mind for the fatal ſtroke." To this ſhe made no reply, but continuing on her knees, with eyes uplifted to heaven, ſighs and tears being the language of her ſoul, his impious hand was about to give the fatal thruſt, but the other catched hold of his arm, and ſtopt his ſword; and after that, they whiſpered, but ſhe knew not

not what they ſaid, till their farther attempt revealed it.

They had no ſooner done confering notes, but they violently forced her on her back, and prepared to raviſh her firſt, and then put her to death: her cries were upon this redoubled, and ſhe begged death rather than the loſs of her chaſtity, opening her boſom, and tempting their ſwords to pierce it. But her beauty in this ſorrowful condition was ſo charming in their luſtful eyes, that they were inexorable to her cries and prayers. O had Alanſon been but there, with what vengeance, at this piteous ſight would his ſword have been drawn to their deſtruction, and her reſcue! but he being ignorant of the wounds his dear lady was about to receive, heaven interpoſed for her reſcue: for the villains fell at diſcord, who ſhould firſt enjoy her; and the conteſt grew ſo hot, that they diſputed it with their ſwords, and in the duel, the pretended captain (moſt forward in the miſchief) was run through the body, and with a ghaſtly groan yielded up his wicked ſoul into the hands of death. The other being ſorely wounded, and fainting through loſs of blood, gave Deidamia time to fly farther into the woods wandering ſo far, that, night covering every thing with darkneſs, ſhe thought ſhe might now reſt a little to recover breath; and ſo ſat down upon the ground: tho' the dangers ſhe had ſo lately eſcaped from wicked men,

men, and thoſe that ſhe now feared from wild beaſts, would not a long time ſuffer her to cloſe her eyes; however ſhe ceaſed not with earneſt prayers and ſupplications to recommend herſelf to God, and implore his aid and protection; who by the late wonderful deliverance he had given her, had ſufficiently ſhewn her how able he is to ſave to the utmoſt, even in the midſt of the greateſt dangers. The conſideration whereof was a mighty allay to her preſent ſorrows, in the midſt of that forlorn condition to which ſhe was reduced; ſo that a little ſupported thereby, ſhe at laſt fell into a ſound ſleep, having no other pillow than a turf of graſs, nor covering than the canopy of heaven. The morning being come, Deidamia again returned thanks to God, both for her late deliverance, and her laſt night's preſervation; earneſtly begging of him, That as he had graciouſly begun to deliver her, ſo he would in his own good time compleat it, to his own glory and her good; and that, though at preſent her afflictions were not joyous but grievous, yet, through God's over-ruling providence, they might afterwards bring forth for her the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs; humbly deſiring ſhe might be kept from harbouring hard thoughts of God, or of his truth and ways, which ſhe had ſo lately embraced, notwithſtanding any ſufferings ſhe had or might meet withal upon that

that account. And having thus recommended herſelf to God, ſhe reſolved, if it were poſſible, to get out of that deſolate, pathleſs, and ſolitary place: but the more ſhe thought to extricate herſelf, the more ſhe found herſelf entangled, and without hopes of getting out. The fruits, which at that time of the year grew upon the trees, ſupplied her with food; and the little purling ſtreams that iſſued from ſome ſprings in the wood, ſupplied her with drink: ſo that finding it impoſſible to get away, ſhe was content to tarry there, till the providence of God ſhould find out ſome way of deliverance for her; being ſatisfied in this, that the comforts of converſation, and other conveniencies that ſhe uſed to have, were abundantly made up in the communion ſhe enjoyed with God, whoſe bleſſed preſence, as ſhe has ſince confeſſed, did more than recompenſe for all her outward wants—In the poſſeſſion of which happineſs we will leave her for a time, and look back to ſee what became of the ſurviving ruffian.

His companion (as we have already heard) was killed in their conteſt, about which ſhould enjoy, or rather raviſh Deidamia firſt; and he that ſurvived, fainted away thro' loſs of blood, which (as we have already related) made way for Deidamia's eſcape. But he recovering in ſome little time, found means to ſtop its effuſion; and then, miſſing of Deidamia, he made what ſearch he could for her, not ſo much to

ſatisfy

ſatisfy his luſt, (which his loſs of blood had pretty much allayed) as to take away her life, that in time to come ſhe might not be an evidence of his wickedneſs; but not finding her after all his ſearch, he buried his companion and returned to thoſe that had ſet him to work, telling them, "That Deidamia, when ſhe found ſhe muſt die, by a ſurprize, had ſnatched away his companion's ſword, and ſlain him with it by an unlooked for thruſt; but that himſelf had quickly revenged it by her own death, and had buried them both in a deep pit to avoid diſcovery." This they believed, and gave him what they had promiſed, being mightily pleaſed that now they were as they thought at leaſt, out of danger.

Whilſt theſe things were thus acted, Deidamia's parents were exceedingly troubled, even to that degree, that their ſleep departed from them; and thoſe little ſlumbers that they ſometimes got, were interrupted with ſtrange and unaccountable dreams, which were alſo attended with an unuſual melancholy, of which they could give no account. This made them reſolve to enquire after Deidamia, of whom they had heard nothing ſince the permiſſion they gave to Antonio to carry her to a nunnery.

But Fronovius and Antonio had been ſo cunning to prevent their diſcovery of the villainy, that for a ſum of money, they engaged a certain abbeſs of Antonio's acquaintance, to ac-

knowledge when there ſhould be occaſion, that Deidamia had been brought thither, but that ſhe had made her eſcape from thence, ſo that ſhe knew not what was become of her, nor could give any account of the reaſon of it, but only by a note that ſhe had left behind her in her chamber; which note, Fronovius who (as we have already ſaid) had a notable faculty at counterfeiting of hands, had writ in a hand ſo like Deidamia's, that it could not be diſtinguiſhed. They had alſo given the abbeſs a ladder of ropes, by which it was pretended ſhe had made her eſcape. Fronovius and Antonio having ſo well laid their deſign with the abbeſs, kept poſſeſſion of Alanſon's houſe without fear or controul. And therefore when Deidamia's parents came thither to enquire after their daughter, they received them with much ſeeming courteſy and kindneſs; and Fronovius told them, "That though it had unhappily fallen out, that their lady had been perverted to hereſy ſince the departure of the count her huſband, yet he had taken that care of the family in his lord's abſence, which was conſiſtent with his duty; and that as to his lady, the orders they had been pleaſed to give to Antonio to ſend her to a nunnery, had been punctually obſerved; and he hoped by that means againſt the coming home of their lord, ſhe might be again reconciled to her mother church, out of which there is no ſalvation." Though this diſcourſe

of

of Fronovius' was very plauſible, yet the parents of Deidamia, were not at all ſatisfied with it, but deſired to ſee and diſcourſe with her in the nunnery where ſhe was; which Fronovius ſeemed ready to aſſent to, and with Antonio offered their ſervice to accompany them thither, telling them, they had given a ſtrict charge to the abbeſs, to prevent any heretics from coming to her, that none might be admitted to ſpeak with her but themſelves, or by their immediate order.

The parents being for the preſent ſatisfied with this anſwer, lay there that night, big with the hopes they had of ſeeing their daughter the next day; which being come, they went with Antonio and Fronivus to the nunnery, but were extremely ſurprized when they came thither, to hear the abbeſs ſay, that the young lady had been too hard for her; and notwithſtanding all her care and diligence, had found a way to make her eſcape but the day before; and then led them into the garden, ſhewing them the ladder of ropes by which ſhe got over the wall; and then taking them into a room that ſhe called her chamber, gave them the note which Fronovius left her, aſking her parents if they knew that hand; they haſtily opened it, and thought verily it had been of Deidamia's writing; and then reading, found it to contain theſe words.

" HAVING been forced to this place a-
" againſt my mind and conſcience, let
" none be troubled that I have found a means
" to ſet myſelf at liberty; and am gone to him
" who no doubt will right me of the injury
" done me by my treacherous ſervants."

DEIDAMIA.

Her parents upon reading this letter, believing it to be true, burſt forth into tears for the loſs of their daughter, not knowing now in what part of the country to ſeek for her: the only hope they had was, that ſhe was gone into Flanders to her huſband; to which opinion Fronovius and Antonio both perſuaded them, from that expreſſion in the note, " I am gone to him that will right my injuries." Upon which, giving Fronovius a charge to be a faithful ſteward in his lord's abſence, they returned to their own houſe, and writ the following letter to the count, and ſent it by an expreſs to Flanders.

To the Count de Alanſon, Colonel of the Regiment of Picardy.

Deareſt Son,

" IT is not without inexpreſſible grief, that
" we write theſe lines, which bring you
" the

" the ſad tidings of the greateſt affliction that
" ever befel you; and which, without the di-
" vine aid, you will find it very hard to bear;
" but I hope heaven will ſupport you under
" it. It is in brief, the loſs of Deidamia! I
" do not mean by death, for had heaven or-
" dained it ſo, that would have been far more
" eligible: but, alas! ſhe is loſt both to her-
" ſelf and all of us; and ſhe is ſince your de-
" parture, perverted to hereſy, and turned an
" obſtinate Hugonot; which whilſt we endea-
" voured to reclaim her from, by conſenting
" upon the advice of your chaplain, father
" Antonio, that ſhe ſhould be put into a nun-
" nery, ſhe is eſcaped from thence no one
" knows whither. The thought thereof has fil-
" led the hearts of myſelf and wife with ſuch
" inexpreſſible grief and ſorrow, as hath ren-
" dered us altogether inconſolable; our only
" remaining hope is, that ſhe may be gone to
" you; and that (if you have not already) you
" may yet hear of her in a few days; for ſhe
" left behind her in her chamber at the nun-
" nery of St. Bridget's, whither Fronovius and
" Antonio conducted her, the following note.

" HAVING been forced to this place a-
" gainſt my mind and conſcience, let
" none be troubled that I found a means to ſet
" myſelf at liberty; and am gone to him who

" no doubt will right me of the injury done " me by my treacherous ſervants."

DEIDAMIA.

" It is this note alone that gives us ground " to hope that you may ſee her again; and I " pray God it may fall out accordingly. And " whenever this loſt ſheep ſhall be found again, " I doubt not but you will lay her in your bo- " ſom, according to the example of our great " ſhepherd; and by your wonted love and ten- " derneſs towards her, endeavour to reſtore her " again to the true-fold and church of Chriſt; " to whoſe protection I commit you, and ſo " farewell."

J. MONTAIGN.

The Count Alanſon was ſo tranſported with grief at the reading of this letter, that for ſome time he remained ſpeechleſs. His trouble was too great to vent itſelf in words, ſtill waters being always the deepeſt. But ſoon after his ſorrow gave itſelf vent, in the moſt paſſionate and feeling complaints; and calling for pen and ink, he writ the following letter to his father.

Alanſon to Sieur Montaign.

SIR,

I RECEIVED your letter, the contents whereof have brought that grief and ſorrow to my heart,

heart, that will continue there for ever, unleſs the ſight of my deareſt Deidamia removes it: Her being turned Hugonot, is not that which gives me much trouble; it rather makes me think there is ſomething of good in thoſe opinions, or elſe ſo much goodneſs and virtue, as that of Deidamia's, could never have embraced them. Had you but let her alone in my houſe, I had been happy ſtill; but your endeavouring to reclaim her has been the ruin of us both. I am ſo tranſported with grief and anger, that I know not what to write, nor would I write at all, but come away immediately, were it not for the hopes you give me from the note found in the chamber of my deareſt Deidamia, that ſhe was gone to him that would ſoon right her injuries, and that can be none but myſelf; might I but recover her again, ſhe ſhould not be miſtaken in her thoughts. 'Tis in hopes of her coming, that I am content to ſtay here a little longer: for it is Deidamia alone can make me happy. Farewell.

ALANSON.

The meſſenger being returned with Alanſon's letter, it adminiſtered freſh grief to Deidamia's parents. For they thereby found, that by their too eaſily yielding to Antonio's deſigns, they had not only loſt their daughter, but the affection of their ſon-in-law. In this ſtate we will

now

now leave them, and make Deidamia a viſit in her ſorrowful ſolitude.

Deidamia being in that lonely place, each day removed her habitation, until at laſt ſhe found a cave to ſecure herſelf from the injuries of the weather; and it was a quiet reſting-place for her in the night ſeaſon; for by ſhutting up the mouth of the cave, ſhe covered herſelf from all danger; which ſhe looked upon, and thanked God for as a great mercy: and living upon the fruits that grew in the wood, (as I ſaid before) ſhe ſpent her time wholly in prayer and meditations; and though her diet and lodging was extremely changed, yet her health was both continued and increaſed; and ſhe found that promiſe made good unto her, *As thy day is, ſo ſhall thy ſtrength be.*

She had now lived almoſt four months in this ſolitude, and the winter approaching, began to make the woods uncomfortable, and the cold extremely nipping; ſo that Deidamia was forced often to walk apace to get her a heat. One day as ſhe was walking farther than ordinary, ſhe diſcovered ſome kind of an obſcure path ſhe had not ſeen before; and though ſhe knew not whither it would lead her, ſhe was reſolved to follow the tract: ſhe travelled ſo far that day, that it was in vain for her to think of returning to her beloved cave, where ſhe had lain ſo many nights; and therefore making the beſt ſhift that ſhe could, ſhe ſat down upon the ground,

ground, and recommending herſelf to the Almighty's protection, compoſed herſelf to reſt. The next morning ſhe aroſe as ſoon as it was light, and travelling forward perceived her path to be like that of the *juſt*, which, the wiſe man tells us, *ſhines more and more unto the perfect day:* and ſhe was encouraged to go on, becauſe ſhe fancied ſhe heard the barking of dogs; and after travelling a little farther, ſhe was well aſſured it was a real thing, and not a fancy only; and therefore ſhe purſued her journey the more eagerly. The ſun had not come to its meridian, when ſhe heard an unuſual ruſhing amongſt the buſhes, and ſtanding ſtill to know what it might mean, ſhe perceived a grave old man, with two dogs following him, come from among the trees. They were both alike ſurprized at the interview; for the old man, having never ſeen any human creature in that place before, could not but be amazed to ſee a woman coming from the midſt of the wood; and therefore addreſſing himſelf to her, he enquired by what misfortune ſhe came thither? entreating her not to be afraid, for ſhe ſhould receive no harm from him: Deidamia, upon this, looking earneſtly upon him, and perceiving his carriage and demeanour to be what became the gravity of his years, ſhe told him, "She was indeed in a wild place, and knew not the way out again." To this the old man replied, "If ſhe would go with him to his homely cottage,

his

his wife would conduct her out of the wood." Deidamia presently accepted of his kindness, and went with him. And after they had gone about the space of a mile, they came to his house, where the good old woman (who was somewhat surprized to see her husband bring a stranger along with him) rose up, and received her very courteously, desiring her to sit down and refresh herself with such homely fare as their cottage afforded, which she did; and then asked her farther how she came into that place. Deidamia desired they would ask her no questions, for the relation of her story would but renew her grief; only thus much she would let them know, that her being there alive was the effect of God's providence in delivering her from wicked and blood-thirsty men, that sought to take away her life. Upon which, perceiving her to be full of grief, they asked her no more questions; but finding her very weary, they led her into a homely, but clean apartment, to repose herself upon the bed. Deidamia was mighty thoughtful what this aged couple might be; and whether or no, for her apparel's sake, and that gold, and those jewels she had about her, she might not fall into as great a danger as that she had formerly escaped; and though she was at first glad of their company, she could have wished herself in her beloved cave again. But her fears were quickly over, when by a French Bible, and other good books she found in her room,

room, and by the hearty prayers of the good old man at night, ſhe perceived they were Hugonots, who had fled into that ſolitary retirement for the ſake of their religion. This made her be much more free with them, bleſſing God for his providence in bringing her thither, and reſolving to continue there, till ſhe could meet with an opportunity to return home into the arms of her deareſt Alanſon: and the old couple having underſtood her hiſtory more fully, by their pity and commiſeration, made her abode with them more eaſy; and the communion ſhe had with them in the things of another world, weaned her from this in a great meaſure. So that there ſhe took up her abode and continued with them, not only that winter, but the year following, until ſhe was found out by her beloved Alanſon; to whom it is time that we now return.

The Count Alanſon having tarried at the camp a whole month after the receiving of his father-in-law's letter, in expectation of ſeeing his deareſt Deidamia, began now to be impatient of tarrying any longer; and indeed, during all that time, he was ſo much changed in his carriage, humour, and converſation, that all thoſe with whom he uſed to converſe in the camp, took notice of it, he having abandoned himſelf to an extreme melancholy; therefore deſiring of the king to go home, both for the recovery of his health, and for the ſettling ſome affairs

affairs in his family, he eaſily obtained it; and ſoon after, tho' with a heavy heart, arrived there: where his firſt buſineſs was to enquire after Deidamia; but none of the ſervants could give any account of her, but Fronovius and Antonio, who gave him the ſame account that had been ſent him by his father-in-law: after which he ſternly aſked them, "How they durſt diſpoſe of their lady and miſtreſs, contrary to her will, without his conſent or knowledge?" telling them, he feared, by the note ſhe had written, it was their treachery that was the occaſion of her loſs; which if he could but be confirmed in, he would take care they ſhould receive a puniſhment ſuitable to the greatneſs of their crimes. At which Fronovius and Antonio began to tremble, and make the beſt excuſes for themſelves they could; alledging the conſent of her parents for what they did. But that did not at all ſatisfy Alanſon, who ſoon diſcharged them from his ſervice, and reſolved to travel in ſearch of Deidamia, though he knew not which way to bend his courſe: But after many a tedious journey, enquiring amongſt thoſe who were favourers of Hugonots he could hear no tidings of her; ſo that full of grief and ſorrow, he led a retired, melancholy life in his own houſe, abſenting himſelf from all company, and mourning like a turtle that had loſt his mate, though his friends, by all means poſſible endeavoured to comfort him; perſuading

ing him to ceaſe his grief, for that it was probable Deidamia, by ſome misfortune or other was dead; and therefore they adviſed him to think of a ſecond marriage, as that which would reſtore him to his former gaiety and make him forget Deidamia. But the more they endeavoured to perſuade him, the more he was reſolved to the contrary; and therefore to avoid their continued importunities, he fixed his reſolution once more to travel in queſt of her: which accordingly he did, but without ſucceſs: and therefore he reſolved to return again to his own houſe, and there ſpend the remainder of his days in ſolitude.

But as he was returning home, in his way, he met with a vaſt concourſe of people, and demanding the occaſion of it, he was told a criminal was going to be broken on the wheel for a murder he had committed; upon which, curioſity led him to ſee the execution; and getting pretty near, the malefactor caſt his eyes upon him, and ſtraightway knew him to be Alanſon, the huſband of Deidamia; and being ſmitten with remorſe of conſcience, he beckoned Alanſon to come near, and humbly begged his pardon for the wrong he had done him. At this, Alanſon both ſtarted and fell a trembling, fearing it was for her murder the criminal was to die. But coming nearer, the malefactor aſked him, "If he had heard any news of his lady?" and then in tears confeſſed, "that

"himſelf

" himſelf and another had been hired to mur-
" der her, to which end they carried her into
" a great wood, (which he named to him) but
" by a miraculous providence, ſhe eſcaped out
" of their hands; that afterwards he had re-
" ported to thoſe that ſet him to work, that he
" had actually murdered her; for which he
" received the reward; but which way ſhe eſ-
" caped he knew not; and that this was about
" two years ſince." The Count urged him to tell the names of thoſe that had ſo hired him; but he ſaid, " He had ſworn upon the holy ſa-
" crament of the altar never to diſcloſe them,
" and that he feared damnation if he ſhould:
" Only ſaid he, this I may ſay without break-
" ing my oath, they were two perſons in whom
" you have put a great deal of confidence." And then ſolemnly atteſted, " That what he
" ſaid, was the truth," and ſoon after was executed.

This dying criminal's confeſſion, confirmed Alanſon, that Deidamia had been treacherouſly carried thither, either from his houſe or the nunnery; and he no longer doubted that Fronovius and Antonio were the perſons that had hired villains to murder her; and therefore, though they had been removed from his ſervice ſome time, yet he was reſolved to purſue them, in order to bring them to juſtice: but firſt he intended to make a freſh ſearch after Deidamia, the criminal having given him an account where ſhe

ſhe eſcaped from them; and therefore he thought if ſhe was ſtill alive, ſhe might be ſomewhere in the vicinity of the wood. Towards which therefore he bended his courſe; and being arrived in ſight thereof, and ſeeing how vaſt a place it was, he perceived it would be a difficult thing to find her, even though ſhe was there; yet at his entering in, he conceived ſome hopes in his mind, that he ſhould not loſe his labour. Whereupon alighting, and giving his horſe to his ſervant, who had attended him in all his melancholy travels, and charging him to attend there till he came back, he went into the wood alone, and found himſelf entangled amongſt thickets, briars and buſhes; yet ſtill he went on, ſearching every cave and ſolitary place, often calling out, Deidamia! till darkneſs coming on, made him think of returning to his man; but he found he was gone too far to retreat back in time, and therefore reſolved to go forward; and being, no doubt, guided by providence, he happened upon that cave where Deidamia had ſo often bewailed his abſence, and mourned her own ſolitary ſtate; and there he reſted his weary and tired body that night, reſolving to renew his ſearch the next morning; which being come, juſt as he was going out of the cave, he perceived ſomething ſparkle very bright on the ground, which he took up, and looking on it in the open light, he found it to be a locket of diamonds which he had formerly

merly given Deidamia, and ſhe unwittingly had dropt there. The finding of this filled him with ſome tranſports of joy, as looking upon it as an earneſt of his good ſucceſs in finding the owner. Thereupon he often repeated her name very loud, but could receive no anſwer, but by ſome broken echoes, and therefore went on he knew not whither; but being directed by the ſame providence that had before conducted her to the cave, when he had wandered ſo far that he was almoſt hopeleſs, he was ſuddenly ſet upon by two whiffling curs; which, upon offering to draw his ſword, ran away barking from him; which he purſuing, came in a little time to a path, where he could diſcern the footſteps of human creatures, which very much revived his hopes, and encouraged him ſtill to go on. He had not gone far before he diſcerned ſmoke to iſſue from a ſmall cottage; to which as he approached nearer, he was again ſaluted by the furious barking of thoſe dogs, whom he had before purſued. This was the cottage where Deidamia reſided! who, upon the barking of the dogs, looking out to ſee what was the matter, eſpied Alanſon coming towards her! and (the idea of his image being continually in her breaſt) ſhe no ſooner ſaw, but knew him; and running into his arms in an exceſs of joy, was only able to cry out, Ah! my dear Lord Alanſon! But exceſs of joy proves ſometimes fatal; and it had like to have done ſo to Deidamia;

damia, for ſhe immediately ſwooned away in his arms. The dogs ſtill continued their barking, which alſo cauſed the good old woman of the cottage to ſee what the cauſe was. She was much ſurpriſed to ſee a genteel ſtranger there, and Deidamia, fainting in his arms; however, ſhe made what haſte ſhe could to endeavour her recovery, deſiring Alanſon to bring her into the houſe; which he immediately did, telling the good woman that he was Deidamia's huſband, which ſhe (being very well acquainted with Deidamia's ſtory) was very glad to hear. It was a conſiderable time before Deidamia could be brought to herſelf, which ſo much afflicted the Count, that he was almoſt ready to faint away himſelf. But, his lady being again recovered, Alanſon, with a thouſand kiſſes and endearing expreſſions, aſſured her of the truth, reality, and conſtance of his affections towards her, whilſt ſhe, on the other hand, ſeemed to be the moſt ſatisfied creature in the world, in that ſhe had once more ſeen her deareſt Lord Alanſon; deſiring him not to be troubled at her fainting away, ſince it was only occaſioned by the exceſs of joy ſhe conceived in ſeeing him again; and that death itſelf would have been eaſy to her upon ſo happy an occaſion, and eſpecially dying in his arms.

Whilſt in this manner they were expreſſing the ardency of their affections to each other, the good-man of the houſe came home, and

being told by his wife that Deidamia's husband was there, he was overjoyed; and courteously saluted Alanson, telling him, "He was sure he was a welcome man there to them all, but especially to Deidamia, who had long mourned his absence." Alanson kindly thanked him, and told him, he should ever honor him as the refuge and preserver of his dear lady. And after such civilities on each side passed, the good woman set before him such homely refreshment as she had prepared on the table: Alanson eat but little, Deidamia's presence being more to him than all the dainties in the world; yet perceiving with what coarse fare his lady had been there contented, he praised her humility, and wondered at her virtue. Dinner being ended, Alanson was concerned for his servant, whom he had left in the entrance of the wood, and would have gone back to him; but the good old man would by no means let him, telling him he would go himself, because he better knew the way, and could more easily find it; and so taking his dogs along with him, he went accordingly: The man having waited at the entrance of the wood, from the time that his master went into it, till the next morning, and hearing nothing of him, leaving his horses in the fields adjoining to the wood, resolved to find him out; and having got a good way, he met the old gentleman, who was coming to him; and enquiring of him for his master, whom

whom he deſcribed, he told him he had both ſeen, and was come from him, to conduct him where he was, and that he had found his lady; at this the ſervant was very glad, and joyfully went along with him. After the old gentleman was gone for the ſervant, the Count and his lady went into the woods, and there ſhe gave him a particular account of all her ſorrows and ſufferings ſince his departure from her, and the reaſon of her ſtaying where ſhe was, viz. The old gentleman not daring to go out of the wood with her he being a proſcribed perſon; and to go without him was to endanger her own life; beſides, ſhe knew not how Antonio might have ordered matters, having the pretence of hereſy to lay to her charge; and that hearing nothing of him in all this time, ſhe thought his affections might have been eſtranged from her. But Alanſon aſſured her to the contrary, telling her, he could not but wonder at the unparalleled villainy of Fronovius and Antonio, and that he had turned them out of his ſervice ſoon after he came home from the camp. After which, the old gentleman and Alanſon's ſervant, being (as before related) arrived at the cottage, the evening was far ſpent, and ſo they all betook themſelves to reſt.

The next morning Alanſon was preparing for his return home: but before they went, their aged landlord would need have them ſtay and dine, and in diſcourſe told him, he was once

a tenant of his father's; but by cruel edict's was forced not only to leave that farm, but his paternal inheritance; ſuffering the ſpoils and loſs of all, for the ſake of Chriſt and a good conſcience; and in this ſolitary retirement, had enjoyed more true peace and ſatisfaction, than in all the pleaſure of his forepaſt life. The Count then aſked him his name; which he told him was De la Mont; upon which he preſently knew and embraced him, ſaying, "That tho' himſelf was of the Romiſh perſuaſion, yet he had often pitied his ſufferings; adding, that it was given out he died in priſon." The pious Deidamia, from this diſcourſe, took an occaſion to ſay, "Ah my deareſt lord! you ſee what a cruel and mercileſs religion it is that you profeſs, and which through the goodneſs of God, I have lately departed from." I am not ſurpriſed (ſaid Alanſon) at that which you ſay, for I was informed in Flanders that you had changed your religion." "I wiſh to God, replied Deidamia, that yourſelf, my deareſt lord, was likewiſe made a partaker of the ſame happy change." Upon this Monſ. De la Mont put in, and laid down ſuch weighty reaſons for the truth of the reformed religion, and againſt the errors of the church of Rome, that it encouraged Deidamia farther to go on, and ſhew the viciouſneſs and debauchery of the Romiſh clergy, their bloody principles and perſecuting ſpirit; ſo that Alanſon was forced to confeſs, that

that what was alledged againſt their practices was true, but as to their principles (abating that of perſecution) he believed they might be miſtaken: Upon which Deidamia replied, "I am glad, my dear lord, to find you are againſt perſecution; I hope then you will be willing I ſhall enjoy the liberty of my conſcience, the only happineſs I have had in this ſolitary retirement; and that you will never go about to compel me to go to maſs, which I will rather chuſe to die than do" To this Alanſon replyed, that he was no ſuch bigot as to think that thoſe that ſincerely worſhipped God according to the beſt of their underſtanding, as he was confident Deidamia did, might not be accepted of him, tho' of an opinion different from himſelf: And as to compel her to go to maſs, if by arguments he could not perſuade her to it, he ſolemnly promiſed he never would uſe any other means.

And being now ready to depart, Alanſon offered La Mont ſtore of gold for their kindneſs to his lady while ſhe had been with them which he abſolutely refuſed, ſaying, Her converſation had been ſo agreeable that they were the perſons who had been obliged. So that leave being taken, and La Mont praying that God would go along with them, and make their way proſperous they parted, and coming out of the wood the ſervant readily found the horſes; and Deidamia gettting up behind her lord, they made the beſt of their way towards Alanſon's houſe

where they were received with the rejoicing of their acquaintance, and much more of her parents, to whom in a day or two they made a visit, Deidamia being received by them as one rising from the dead. And the story of their daughter's troubles being all related to them, they could not but admire the providence of God, in preserving her, and wonder at the monstrous wickedness of Fronovius and Antonio, who, upon thier hearing of the confession of the dying criminal, had withdrawn themselves from their former residences. And Antonio (the better to escape deserved punishment for his lustful attempts upon Deidamia's chastity) went privately to the bishop of Rheims, and told him that Count Alanson's lady was depraved with heresy, in which she was so much countenanced by her lord, that himself, for endeavouring to recliam her, was turned out of the family, and cut off from all interest in it, and therefore came humbly to beg his protection against so powerful an adversary, since what he had done, was only out of zeal to promote the Catholic religion. The bishop received him into his protection, and writ a sharp letter to the Count about it; who having received it, believed it was done by the instigation of Antonio, whom he heard he had entertained; and being troubled that so great a villain should find any countenance from the bishop, he writ back again to know the names of those that had so injuriously

injuriouſly informed him againſt his lady; but the biſhop would not gratify him ſo far in his deſires. This made the Count return him a ſecond letter, written in a more angry ſtile, declaring, "That if he could not have juſtice from him, the king himſelf ſhould be acquainted with it, and by him he would ſeek redreſs." This ſo nettled the biſhop, that he ſent examiners to his lady to interrogate her about her religion, of which the Count having ſome intimation, ſent her to her parents, who were extremely troubled at theſe freſh misfortunes, and mightily ſcandalized at the villainy of Antonio and the biſhop's protecting him from juſtice, grew thereupon very cold in the profeſſion of the popiſh religion, which ſo furiouſly perſecuted innocence and virtue, and countenanced the greateſt wickedneſs: this the pious Deidamia wiſely improved, and ſo effectually wrought with them, by her warm and zealous diſcourſes, that thro' the operation of God's holy Spirit aſſiſting her, they were both brought over to the embracing of the truth.

The biſhop's examiners, being diſappointed, returned back without their errand; upon which the biſhop threatned to excommunicate both Alanſon and his family; and was ſoon after as good as his word. Upon this Alanſon poſts away to the king, who was then at Marly, where he complained of the injury done him by the biſhop of Rheims, both in excommunicating him,

him, and protecting a villanous criminal from juſtice. But it ſeems the biſhop had been before hand with him, and made his complaint firſt. For the king received him very coldly, and told him, the biſhop of Rheims was a good man, and he left his buſineſs wholly to him. On which Alanſon returned home much diſcontented, and found that in his abſence freſh ſearch had been made in his houſe for his lady, tho' without ſucceſs. Then he went to the biſhop himſelf, and boldly charged him with entertaining a wicked perſon, to the prejudice of his honour; telling who he was, and declared his crimes, deſiring he might be brought forth, and his lady ſhould appear. But the biſhop refuſing this, and telling him, his lady was accuſed of hereſy, and he of countenancing it; the Count in a kind of holy anger, told him, That religion could not be of God, which encouraged villainy, and ſought the deſtruction of them that where virtuous. At this the biſhop ſtormed, and told him, "That he ſhould be anſwered in another manner." And ſoon after, he had ſecret notice from court, "That upon a freſh complaint of the biſhop's, both he and his lady were proſcribed as Hugonots; and that, notwithſtanding his friends interceſſion, and his own former merits, his place where taken away, and his eſtate ordered to be ſeized, as a terror to others." Alanſon, finding himſelf unable to withſtand this ſtorm, packed up

the

the richeſt of his effects, and privately ſent them to his wife's father, where ſhe was all this while concealed, and then followed after himſelf. Where, having declared the great injuſtice he had met withal, contrary to all religion, honour, honeſty and conſcience, he then told his relations he was reſolved by God's help to embrace that religion, for which he had been a ſufferer before he was a profeſſor; "for that religion could not be of God, that did ſo evidently ſet up the kingdom of the devil." At which they all rejoiced, and Deidamia more eſpecially; who paſſionately embracing him, ſaid, "Her father and mother were of the ſame mind with him." At which Alanſon was the more encouraged. But leſt their adverſaries ſhould come thither to ſearch for them, they withdrew into a ſmall village and lived there obſcurely, while La Mont could hear of a convenient veſſel to tranſport them into a country where they might enjoy more liberty.

You have before heard how Bernard the gardener was ſold to a maſter of a ſhip belonging to one of the French plantations in the Weſt Indies; before we conclude, we will briefly ſhew, how God's providence watched over him for good alſo. In his voyage at ſea they met with ſo extraordinary a ſtorm, that all expected preſent death, but Bernard was very calm, putting up his fervent prayer to Almighty God, which was followed by a very great ſerenity and calmneſs,

neſs. This made the maſter have a reſpect for him, and oftentimes diſcourſed with him, his behaviour being always ſober, and his diſcourſe ſavoury. The maſter having made his voyage, ſold Bernard for a ſlave, and having ſtaid there about two months, returned again to France, but the diſcourſes and behaviour of Bernard had made ſo deep an impreſſion in his mind, that he was greatly troubled for having ſold him, inſomuch that he could not reſt, till he had taken a ſolemn reſolution, the next voyage he made, to brink him back; and accordingly the next year making another voyage thither, he made it his buſineſs to enquire after him, and having found him, aſked if he was willing to have his liberty and return to his own country? Bernard replied, he never was in love with ſlavery; but was contented under it whilſt God's providence ordered it ſo; but if he might have his liberty, he would chuſe it rather. Whereupon the maſter paid his ranſom, and brought him back to France; nor was he a loſer by it; for as a recompence for his kindneſs, it pleaſed God to make Bernard an inſtrument to open his eyes, and bring him to the acknowledgement of the truth. Bernard being again got into his own country, made it his whole buſineſs to enquire after the welfare of Alanſon's family, and being told of the ſufferings that had lately befallen them, he was extremely grieved, tho' at the ſame time he could not but rejoice that they

ſuffered

ſuffered in ſo good a cauſe. And ſpeaking of them to ſome of his old chriſtian friends, he was told by one of them, that both the Count and his lady lived obſcurely and in diſguiſe in the neighbouring village; and that if he had a mind to ſee them, he would give him a note to the gentleman of the houſe, upon which he ſhould have admittance to them; or otherwiſe they would not be ſpoken with by any one.

Bernard gladly accepted of his friend's kindneſs, and ſtraightway went to the houſe, and delivered the gentleman the note; the purport of which was this; "That he had known the bearer many years as a faithful friend and brother; and that he had been formerly a ſervant of the Count Alanſon's, and had a great deſire to ſee his lady, which he might ſafely let him do."

Upon reading this note, the gentleman deſired him to come in, and ſent up one of his ſervants to acquaint Deidamia there was one below, deſired to ſpeak with her; upon which Bernard was preſently called up.

Deidamia was mightily ſurprized to ſee Bernard, whom ſhe thought ſhe ſhould never have ſeen more, and very much rejoiced at it; introducing him to her lord, and afterwards to her parents, who all made very much of him, and were glad to ſee him. And having communicated the various providences of God to one another ſince they had been parted, they all bleſ-

ſed

ſed the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men; and afterwards conſulted how to procure a veſſel to convey them out of danger.

Bernard gave them an account, that the maſter of the veſſel which brought him back to France, was alſo converted; and that now his veſſel lay ready to ſail for Denmark, and he was ſure he would be glad to ſerve them. To this they all agreed; and thereupon Bernard went immediately to the maſter of the ſhip, who readily conſented to carry them, and ordered their goods to be brought preſently, and themſelves to come aboard at midnight; at which time Bernard conducted them to the ſhip, and then went aboard with them in quality of their ſervant; and ſoon after, the wind ſerving, they ſet ſail for Denmark; where being arrived, and tarrying a few days, they hired a Dutch veſſel to carry them to Rotterdam, and from thence they went by boat to Utrecht, which being a pleaſant place; and very good air, they reſolved to ſettle there.

Thus, courteous reader, thou haſt had a brief, but true relation of the mercy and goodneſs of God to that noble family, which is the ſubject of this narrative: and he that reads it thro'out ſeriouſly, will find cauſe to make the ſame obſervations that David did of old, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace," which the apoſtle St. James

James farther exemplifies in his epiſtle, "You have heard of the patience of Job, and have ſeen the end of the Lord, how he is very pitiful and of tender mercy." Here you have ſeen the great diſtreſs of Deidamia, and the goodneſs of God in her deliverance. Likewiſe the Count Alanſon rifled of all his eſtate and poſſeſſions; and how God has graciouſly made it up, in giving him that faith, which is far more precious than the gold which periſheth.

But I cannot conclude without giving you an account of the judgment of God upon Fronovius and Antonio, that others may fear and give glory to God.

Fronovius, after the ſeizure of Alanſon's eſtate and his departure into Holland, returned into thoſe parts, but finding himſelf hated by all men for his villainy, he retired into Normondy; where ſoliciting his landlord's daughter to yield to his luſt, and ſhe refuſing it, he took an opportunity to raviſh her; for which he was hanged without the gates of Roan.

And as for Antonio, though he eſcaped the juſtice of man, he could not eſcape the judgment of God; for falling diſtracted a little time after, he confeſſed it was God's judgment upon him for the miſchief he had wrought againſt his lord Alanſon and his virtuous lady; ſaying, "They had taken a way to be ſaved, but he was ſure to be damned." And ſo daſhing out

his

his brains againſt a wall, he died miſerably, both of them verifying the words of the inſpired penman, "Is not deſtruction to the wicked, and a ſtrange puniſhment to the workers of iniquity?"

END OF THE FRENCH CONVERT.

A RELATION of the fearful STATE of *FRANCIS SPIRA.*

IN the year 1548, when the glorious Sun of the Goſpel was but newly riſen in Europe, in the days of the reign of Edward the Sixth of that name, king of England, in the territory, and under the juriſdiction of the city of Venice, being the very border of Italy, in the town of Citadella, lived one Francis Spira, a civil lawyer, an advocate of great rank and eſteem, being of great experience, of carriage circumſpect and ſevere; his ſpeech grave and compoſed; his countenance ſharp and auſtere; every way befitting that authority whereunto he was advanced; endowed with outward bleſſings of wife and eleven children and wealth in abundance. What his worſt parts were, I have no other warrant than his words; which if not tainted over much with the bitterneſs of a deſperate mind, and bearing a countenance rather of paſſion, than of

of ſober confeſſion, may ſeem to add a period to all further commendations.

" Was I (ſaith he) exceedingly covetous of " money, and accordingly applyed myſelf to " get by injuſtice, corrupting juſtice by deceit " inventing tricks to delude juſtice; good " cauſes I either defended deceitfully, or ſold " them to the adverſary perfidiouſly. Ill cauſes " I maintained with all my might. I wittingly " oppoſed the known truth; and the truſt " committed unto me, I either betrayed or perverted"

Thus having worn out forty-four years, or thereabouts, and the news of the *new* or rather *newly revived* opinions of Luther coming into thoſe parts, repreſented an object of novelty unto him, who being deſirous to know, as he was famous for knowledge, ſuffered not theſe wandering opinions to paſs unexamined; but ſearching into the ſcripture, and into all books of controverſies that he could get, both old and new, and finding more than fame or opinion, he began to taſte their nature ſo well, that he entertains love, and owns them at length, and with ſuch zeal, as he became a profeſſor, yea, a teacher of them, firſt to his wife, children and family, and after to his friends, and familiar acquaintance; and in compariſon, ſeemed to neglect all other affairs, intending ever to preſs this main point, *That we muſt wholly and only depend on the free and unchangeable love of God,*

God, in the death of Chriſt, as the only ſure way to ſalvation. And this was the ſum of all his diſcourſe, which continued for the ſpace of ſix years, or thereabouts, even ſo long as the fire could keep itſelf within private walls; but at length it break forth into public meetings, ſo as the whole province of Padua, dawned by the luſtre thereof. The clergy finding the trade of their *pardons* to decay and their *purgatory* to wax cold, began to beſtir themſelves; gloſſing their actions, firſt with calumnious aſperſions upon the whole profeſſion; then more plainly ſtriking at Spira with grievous accuſations.

And to effect their purpoſe, ſome promiſed labour, others favour, ſome advice, others maintenance; all join to divide either his ſoul from his body, or both from God.

Now was John Caſa, the pope's legate, reſident at Venice, being by birth a Florentine; and one that wanted neither malice againſt thoſe of this way, nor craftineſs to effect his malicious purpoſes; to him theſe men repair with outcries againſt Spira, that he was the man that condemned the received rights of the church, eluded the eccleſiaſtical power, and ſcandalized the policy thereof; one of no mean rank, being a man of account and authority, and thereunto learned in the ſcriptures, elegant in ſpeech, and in one word; a dangerous Lutheran, having alſo many diſciples, and therefore not to be deſpiſed.

At this began the legate to caſt his eyes on the terrible alteration that had lately happened in Germany; where, by the means of one only (Luther) the Romiſh religion had ſuffered ſuch a blow, as that it could neither be cured by diſſimulation, nor defended by power; but the clergy muſt either mend their manners, or loſe their dignities. On the other ſide, when he ſaw how propenſe the common people, inhabiting the bordering country of Italy, were to entertain theſe new opinions, he now thought it no time to diſpute or perſuade, but with ſpeed repairs to the ſenate and procures authority from them to ſend for Spira.

Spira, by this time had conſidered with himſelf, of the nature of his courage, how evident and notorious it was, and therefore ſubject to be envied, by ſuch as neither liked his perſon nor religion. He perceived that his opinions were neither retired, nor ſpeculative, but ſuch as aimed at the Romiſh faction, and a change of policy. And that his enemies wanted neither power nor occaſion, to call him to an account in public, when he muſt either apoſtatize, and ſhamefully give his former life, yea, his own conſcience the lie, or endure the utmoſt malice of his dreadful enemies; or forſake his wife, children, friends, goods, authority, yea, his dear country, and betake himſelf to a foreign people, there to endure a thouſand miſe-

ries, that do continually wait upon a voluntary exile.

Being thus diſtracted, and toſſed by reſtleſs waves of doubt, without guide to truſt to, or heaven to fly to for ſuccours, on the ſudden, God's Spirit aſſiſting, he felt a calm, and began to diſcourſe with himſelf in this manner.

" Why wandereſt thou thus in uncertainties, " unhappy man? Caſt away fear; put on thy " ſhield, the ſhield of faith. Where is thy " won ed courage, thy goodneſs and conſtan- " cy? Remember that Chriſt's glory lies at " ſtake, ſuffer thou without fear, and he will " defend thee, he will tell thee what thou ſhalt " anſwer; he can beat down all danger; bring " thee out of priſon; raiſe thee from the dead. " Conſider Peter in a dungeon; the martyrs in " the fire. If thou makeſt a good confeſſion, " thou mayeſt indeed go into priſon, or death, " but an eternal reward in heaven remains for " thee. What haſt thou in this world compar- " able to everlaſting happineſs? If thou doſt " otherwiſe, think of the ſcandal, *(common* " *people live by example, thinking whatever is* " *done, is well done)* fear the loſs of peace and " joy; fear death, hell and eternal wrath. " Or, if the fleſh be ſo ſtrong as to cauſe thee " to doubt of the iſſue, fly thy country, get " thee away, though never ſo far, rather than " deny the Lord of life."

Now was Spira in reaſonable quiet, being reſolved

reſolved to yield to thoſe weighty reaſons. Yet holding it wiſdom to examine all things, he conſults alſo with fleſh and blood. Thus the battle doth renew, and the fleſh begins in this manner.

" Be well adviſed; fond man, conſider rea-
" ſon on both ſides, and then judge. How
" canſt thou thus overcome thy ſufficiency, as
" thou neither regardeſt the examples of thy
" progenitors, nor the judgment of the whole
" church? Doſt thou not conſider what miſery
" this thy raſhneſs will bring unto thee? Thou
" ſhalt loſe all thy ſubſtance, gotten with ſo
" great care and travail; thou ſhalt undergo
" the moſt exquiſite torments that malice can
" diviſe; thou ſhalt be counted an heretic, and
" to cloſe up all, thou ſhalt die ſhamefully.
" What thinkeſt thou of the loathſome ſtinking
" dungeon, the bloody ax, or the burning fag-
" got? Are they delightful? Be wiſe at length,
" and keep thy life and honor; thou mayeſt
" live to do much good to men, as God com-
" mands thee; thou mayeſt be an ornament to
" thy country, and put the caſe, thy country's
" loſs would be of no ſmall eſteem with thee.
" Wilt thou bring thy friends alſo into danger?
" Thou haſt begotten children, wilt thou now
" cut their throats, and inhumanly butcher
" them, who may in time bring honor to their
" country, glory to God, help and furtherance
" to his church? Go to the legate, weak man,

" freely confeſs thy fault, and help all theſe " miſeries."

Thus did the cares of this world, and the deceitfulneſs of riches choak the good ſeed that was formerly ſown: ſo, as fearing, he faints, and yields unto the alurements of this world; and being thus blinded, he goes to the legate at Venice, and ſalutes him with this news.

Having for theſe divers years, entertained an opinion concerning ſome articles of faith, contrary to the orthodox, and received judgment of the church, and uttered many things againſt the authority of the church of Rome, and the univerſal biſhop; I humbly acknowledge my fault and error, and my folly in miſleading others; I therefore yield myſelf in all obedience to the ſupreme biſhop of the church of Rome, never to depart again from the traditions and decrees of the holy See: I am heartily ſorry for what has paſt, and humbly beg pardon for ſo great an offence.

The legate perceiving Spira to faint, he purſues to the utmoſt; he cauſes a recitation of all his errors to be drawn in writing, together with the confeſſion annexed to it, and commands Spira to ſubſcribe his name thereto, which accordingly he did; then the legate commands him to return to his own town, and there to declare this confeſſion of his, and to acknowledge the whole doctrine of the church

of

of Rome to be holy and true. and to abjure the opinions of Luther, and other ſuch teachers, as falſe and heretical.

[*Man knows not the beginning of ſin, but who bounds the iſſues thereof?*]

Spira having once loſt footing, goes down amain, he cannot ſtay, nor gainſay the legate, but promiſeth to accompliſh his whole will and pleaſure. He ſoon dreſſed himſelf for his journey, and being onward in the way, bethinks himſelf of the large ſpoils he had brought away, from the conflict with the legate; what glorious teſtimony he had given of his great faith and conſtancy in Chriſt's cauſe, and to be plain, how impiouſly he had denied Chriſt and his goſpel, at Venice; and what he promiſed to do farther in his own country. And thus partly with fear and partly with ſhame being confounded, he thought he heard a voice ſpeaking unto him in this manner.

"Spira! What doſt thou here? Wither "goeſt thou? Haſt thou, unhappy man, given "thy hand-writing to the legate, at Venice? "Yet ſee thou do not ſeal it in thine own "country. Doſt thou, indeed, think eternal "life ſo mean, as that thou prefereſt this pre"ſent life before it? Doſt thou well in prefer"ing wife and children before Chriſt? Is the "windy applauſe of the people better, indeed, "than the glory of God? And the poſſeſſion "of this world's good, more dear to thee than

" the ſalvation of thine own ſoul? Is the ſmall " uſe of a moment of time, more deſirable " than eternal wrath is dreadful? Think with " thyſelf, what Chriſt did endure for thy ſake, " is it not equal thou ſhouldeſt ſuffer ſomewhat " for him? Remember, man, that the ſuffer- " ings of this preſent life, are not comparable to " the glory that ſhall be revealed. If thou ſuf- " fereſt with him, thou ſhalt alſo reign with " him. Thou canſt not anſwer for what thou " haſt already done; nevertheleſs the gate of " mercy is not quite ſhut. Take heed that " thou heapeſt not ſin upon ſin, leſt thou re- " pent when it is two late."

Now was Spira in the wilderneſs of doubt, not knowing which way to turn him, nor what to do; yet being arrived in his own country, and among his friends, conſidering what he had done, and what he had farther promiſed to do; and how the terror of God on the one ſide, and the terror of this world on the other, did continually rack him; and therefore he deſired their adviſe in ſo doubtful a caſe. His friends upon ſmall deliberation, anſwered, That it was requiſite he ſhould take heed that he did not in any wiſe betray his wife and children, and all his friends into danger; ſeeing, that by ſo ſmall a matter as the reciting of a little ſchedule, which might be done in leſs ſpace than half an hour, he might both free himſelf from preſent danger, and preſerve many that depended upon him; adding,

adding, moreover, that he could get no credit in relenting from that which he had already in the greateſt part, formed before the legate at Venice; and that in the perfect accompliſhing thereof, little or no diſcredit could ariſe, more than what by the former action he had already ſuſtained. On the other ſide, if he did not perform his promiſe to the legate, he could neither diſcharge himſelf of the ſhame which he had already incurred, nor avoid far more heavy and inſupportable injuries, than probably he ſhould have endured, if he had perſiſted obſtinately in his former opinions.

This was the laſt blow of the battle, and Spira uterly overcome, goes to the prætor, and proffers to perform his promiſe made to the legate, who, in the mean time, had taken order to have all things ready, and ſent the inſtrument of abjuration ſigned by Spira, to the prætor, by the hands of a certain prieſt.

All that night the miſerable man wears out with reſtleſs cares, without any minute of reſt; the next morning being come, he gets up, and being ready, deſperately enters into the public congregation, where maſs being finiſhed, in the preſence of friends and enemies, and of the whole aſſembly, being by eſtimation near two thouſand people; yea, and of heaven itſelf, he recites that infamous abjuration, word for word, as it was written. It being done, he was fined at thirty pieces of gold, which he preſently

ſently paid: five whereof were given to the prieſt that brought the abjuration, the other five and twenty were employed towards the making of a ſhrine to put the euchariſt in. Then was he ſent home, and reſtored to his dignities, goods, wife and children. No ſooner was he departed, but he thought he heard a direful voice ſaying to him;

"Thou wicked wretch, thou haſt denied me, "thou haſt renounced the covenant of thy o-"bedience; thou haſt broken thy vow, hence, "apoſtate, bear with thee, the ſentence of thy "eternal damnation!"

Trembling and quaking in body and mind, he fell down in a ſwoon: Relief was at hand for the body, but from that time forward, he never found any peace or eaſe of mind, by continuing in inceſſant torments, he proteſted that he was captivated under the revenging hand of the great God; that he heard continually that fearful ſentence of Chriſt that juſt judge, that he knew he was utterly undone; that he could neither hope for grace, nor Chriſt's interceſſion with God the Father in his behalf. Thus was his fault ever heavy on his heart, and his judgment before his eyes.

Now began ſome of his friends to repent, too late, of their raſh counſel; others not looking ſo high as the juſt judgment of God, laid all the blame on his melancholy conſtitution: that overſhadowing his judgment, wrought in him a kind

a kind of madneſs. Every one cenſured as his fancy led him; yet for remedy all agreed in this, To uſe both the help of phyſicians, and the pious advice of divines; and therefore thought it fit to convey him to Padua, an univerſity of note, where plenty of all manner of means were to be had.

This they accordingly did, both with his wife, children and whole family; others alſo of his friends accompany him: And being arrived at the houſe of one James Arden, in St. Leonard's parith, they ſent for three eminent phyſicians, who upon due obſervation of the effects, and of other ſymptoms of his diſeaſe, and ſome private conference one with another amongſt themſelves, returned this anſwer; That they could not diſcern that his body was afflicted with any danger, or diſtemper originally from itſelf, by reaſon of the over-ruling of any humour; but that this his malady did ariſe from ſome grief or paſſion of the mind, which being over-burdened, did ſo oppreſs the ſpirits, as they wanted free paſſage; ſtirred up many ill humours, whereof the body of man is full; and theſe aſcending up into the brain, troubled the fancy, ſhadow the ſeat of judgment, and ſo corrupted it. This was the ſtate of his diſeaſe, and that outward part that was viſible to the eye of nature; this they endeavoured to reform by purgation, either to conſume, or at leaſt

leaſt divert the courſe of thoſe humours from the brain: But all their ſkill effected nothing; which made Spira ſay,

"Alas, poor men! how far wide are you? "Do you think, that this diſeaſe is to be cur- "ed by potions? Belive me, there muſt be ano- "ther manner of medicine; it is neither plai- "ſter, nor drugs that can help a fainting ſoul, "caſt down with the ſenſe of ſin, and wrath "of God; 'tis only Chriſt that muſt be the "phyſician, and the goſpel the ſoul's antidote."

The phyſicians eaſily belived him; after they had underſtood the whole truth of the matter, and therefore they wiſhed him to ſeek ſome ſpiritual comfort.

By this time, the fame of this man was ſpread all over Padua, and the neighbouring country; partly, becauſe as the diſeaſe, ſo the occaſion was particularly remarkable: For this was not done in a corner; ſo as daily there came multitudes of all ſorts to ſee him; ſome out of curioſity, only to ſee and diſcourſe; ſome out of a pious deſire to try all means that might reduce him to comfort again; or at leaſt, to benefit themſelves by a ſpectacle of miſery, and the juſtice of God. Amongſt theſe Paulus Vergerius, biſhop of Juſtinopolis, and Mathæus Gribauldus, deſerves eſpecially to be named, as the moſt principal labourers for this man's comfort. They find him now about fifty years of age, neither affected with the dotage of old age, nor

nor with the unconſtant head-ſtrong paſſion of youth, but in the ſtrength of his experience and judgment; in a burning heat, calling exceſſively for drink, yet his underſtanding active, quick of apprehenſion, witty in diſcourſe, above his ordinary manner, and judiciouſly oppoſite. His friends laboured with him by all fair means to receive nouriſhment, which he obſtinately gainſaying, they forcibly infuſed ſome liquid ſuſtenance into his mouth, (moſt of which he ſpit out again exceedingly chafing) and in this fretting mood of his ſaid,

"As it is true that all things work for the "beſt to thoſe that love God, ſo to the wicked "all are contrary. For whereas a plentiful off-"ſpring is the bleſſing of God and his reward, "being a ſtay to the weak eſtate of their aged "parents, to me they are a curſe of bitterneſs "and vexation; they do ſtrive to make me tire "out this—I would fain be at an end. O that "I were gone from hence, that ſomebody "would let out this weary ſoul!"

His friends ſaluted him, and aſked him what he conceived to be the cauſe of his diſeaſe? At which he broke out into a lamentable diſcourſe of the paſſages formerly related, and that with ſuch paſſionate elocution, as cauſed many to weep, and moſt to tremble. They contrarily to comfort him, propounded many examples of God's mercy.

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My ſin (ſaith he) *is greater than the mercy of God.*

Nay, *(anſwered they)* the mercy of God is above all ſin; God would have all men to be ſaved.

"'Tis true, (quoth he) He would have all "that he hath elected to be ſaved; he would "not have damned reprobates to be ſaved; I "am one of that number, I know it; for I "willingly and againſt my knowledge, denied "Chriſt, and I feel that he hardens and will "not ſuffer me to hope."

After ſome ſilence, one aſked him, whether he did not believe that doctrine to be true, for which he was accuſed before the legate? He anſwered, "I did believe it when I denied it; "but now I neither believe that, nor the doc-"trine of the Romiſh church: I believe no-"thing—I have no faith—no truſt—no hope—"I am a reprobate, like Cain or Judas, who "caſting away all hopes of mercy, fell into de-"ſpair; and my friends do me great wrong, "that they ſuffer me not to go to the place of "unbelievers, as I juſtly deſerve.

Here they began ſharply to rebuke him; requiring and charging him, that in any wiſe he did not violate the mercy of God. To which he anſwered, "The mercy of God is exceeding "large, and extends to all the elect, but not "to me, or any like me, who are ſealed up to "wrath. I tell you I deſerve it; my own con-

"ſcience

" ſcience condemns me, what needs any other " judge?"

Chriſt came (ſay they) to take away ſin, Rom. 11. 5 And calling for a book, they read unto him the paſſion of Chriſt, and coming to his nailing to the croſs, Spira ſaid, "This indeed is " comfortable to ſuch as are elected; but as for " me, wretch, they are nothing but grief and " torment, becauſe I contemned them."

Thus roaring for grief, and toſſing himſelf up and down the bed as he lay, he intreated them to read no more.

As Gribauldus was coming to ſee him, Vergerius ſaid to Spira, Dear Sir, here is Dr. Gribauldus, a godly and faithful friend of yours, come to ſee you. He is welcome, ſaid he, but he ſhall find me ill. Gribauldus replyed, Sir, this is but an illuſion of the devil, who doth what he can to vex you; but turn you to God with your whole heart, and he is ready to ſhew you mercy; the Lord you know is full of mercy, it is he that hath ſaid, *That as often as a ſinner ſhall repent of his ſin, he will remember his ſin no more.* Conſider this in the example of Peter, that was Chriſt's familiar and apoſtle, who denied him thrice, and for all that did not God graciouſly reſpect him in the laſt minute of his life? is the Lord's hand now ſhortened that it cannot ſave?

To this Spira anſwered, " If Peter grieved " and repented, it was becauſe Chriſt beheld " him

" him with a merciful eye, and in that he was " pardoned; it was not becauſe he wept, but " becauſe God was gracious to him. But God " reſpects not me, and therefore I am a repro- " bate. I feel no comfort can enter into my " heart; there's only place there for torments " and vexings of ſpirit. I tell you my caſe is " properly mine own; no man was ever in the " like condition, and therefore my ſtate is fear- " ful."

Then roaring out in the bitterneſs of his ſpirit, ſaid, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!* The violence of his paſſion, and actions ſuitable, did amaze many of the beholders; in ſo much as ſome of them ſaid, with whiſpering voices, that he was poſſeſſed. He overhearing it, ſaid, do you doubt it? I have a whole legion of devils which take up their dwelling in me, and poſſeſs me as their own; and juſtly too, for I have denied Chriſt. *Did you it wittingly or not?* ſaid they. That's nothing to the purpoſe, (ſaid Spira) Chriſt ſaith whoſoever denies me before men, him will I deny before my Father who is in heaven. Chriſt will not be denied, no not in a word; and therefore it is enough, though in heart I never denied him.

They obſerving his diſtemper ariſe from the ſenſe and horror of the pains of hell, aſked him, if he thought them worſe pains than what he endured for the preſent? He ſaid, that he knew there

there were far worſe pains than thoſe he then ſuffered; *For the wicked ſhall riſe to their judgment, but they ſhall not ſtand in judgment*, Pſalm i. "This I tremble to think of; yet I "do deſire nothing more than that I might "come to that place where I may be ſure to "feel the worſt, and to be freed from fear of "worſe to come."

Ay, but you are to conſider (ſaid one) that thoſe opinions, for which you were accuſed before the legate, were impious, and therefore you are not to think you denied Chriſt, but rather that you confeſſed him, acknowledging the infallible truth of the Catholic church. Truly, ſaid he, when I did deny thoſe opinions, I did think them to be true, and yet I did deny them.

Go now then, ſaid others, and believe that they are true. Now I cannot (ſaith he) God will not ſuffer me to believe them, nor truſt in his mercy; what would you have me to do? I would fain attain to his power, but cannot though I ſhould preſently be burned for it. But, why do you (ſaid the other) eſteem this ſo great a ſin, when as the learned legate conſtrained you to it; which ſurely he would not have done if your former opinions be not erroneous? No, good Francis, the devil beſets thee; let not the grievouſneſs of any ſin (if any ſuch be) amaze thee.

You ſay right, (ſaid Spira) the devil hath poſſeſſed me, and God hath left me to his pow-

er;

er; for I find I can neither believe the goſpel, nor truſt in God's mercy: I have ſinned againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and God by his immutable decree hath bound me over to perpetual puniſhment, without any hopes of pardon. It is true that the greatneſs of ſins, not the multitude of them, bind God's mercy: all thoſe ſins that in the former part of my life I have committed, then did not ſo much trouble me; for I truſted God would not lay them to my charge: now having ſinned againſt the Holy Ghoſt, God hath taken away from me all power of repentance, and brings all my ſins to remembrance: and guilty of one, guilty of all. And therefore it is no matter whether my ſins be great or ſmall, few or many; they be ſuch as Chriſt's blood, nor God's mercy belongs not unto me. *God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.* This it is that gnaws my heart, he hath hardened me; and I find that he daily more and more doth harden me, and therefore I am out of hope; I tell you there was never ſuch a monſter as I am; never was any man alive ſuch a ſpectacle of exceeding miſery. I know that juſtification is to be expected by Chriſt, and I denied and abjured it, to the end I might keep this frail life from adverſity, and my children from poverty; and now behold, how bitter this life is to me! and God only knows what ſhall become of this my family; but ſure no good is like to betide it;

but

but worſe and worſe, and ſuch a ruin at length, as one ſtone ſhall not be left upon another.

But why ſhould you (ſaid Gribauldus) conceive ſo deeply of your ſin, ſeeing you cannot but know, that many have denied Chriſt, yet never fell into deſpair?

"Well, ſaid he) I can ſee no ground of "comfort for ſuch; neither can I warrant them "from God's revenging hand, or that he will "yet ſuffer ſuch to be in peace; and beſides, "there will a time of danger come, and they "ſhall be thoroughly tried; and if it were not "ſo, yet God is juſt in making me an exam-"ple to others, and I cannot juſtly complain; "there is no puniſhment ſo great but I have "deſerved it, for this ſo heinous offence: I "aſſure you, it is no ſmall matter to deny "Chriſt, and yet it is more ordinary than com-"monly men do conceive of; it is not a de-"nial made before a magiſtrate, as it is with "me; for as oft as a Chriſtian doth diſſemble "the known truth, as often as he approves of "falſe worſhip, by preſenting himſelf at it; ſo "often as he doth things unworthy of his cal-"ling, ſo often he denies Chriſt. Thus did I, "and therefore am juſtly puniſhed for it"

Your eſtate (quoth Gribauldus) is not ſo ſtrange as you make it. Job was ſo far gone, that he complained God had ſet him as a mark againſt him; and David that was a man after God's own heart, complained often that God

had forſaken him, and was become his enemy; yet both received comfort again.

Comfort yourſelf therefore. God will come at length, though he ſeem afar off.

O brother, anſwered Spira, I believe allthis; the *devils believe and tremble*, but David was ever elected, and dearly beloved of God, and though he fell, yet God took not utterly away his Holy Spirit, and therefore was heard when he prayed, *Lord, take not thy holy Spirit from me!* But I am in another caſe, being ever accurſed from the preſence of God; neither can I pray as he did, becauſe his Holy Spirit is quite gone, and cannot be recalled; and therefore I know I ſhall live in continual hardneſs, ſo long as I live. Oh! that I might feel but the leaſt ſenſe of the love of God to me, though but for one ſmall moment, as I now feel his heavy wrath, that burns like torments of hell within me, and afflicts my conſcience with pangs unutterable. Verily deſperation is hell itſelf!

Here Gribauldus ſaid, I do verily believe, Spira, that God having ſo ſeverely chaſtiſed you in this life, correcteth you in mercy here, that he may ſpare you hereafter, and that he hath mercy ſealed up for you in time to come.

Nay, ſaid Spira, hence do I know that I am a reprobate, becauſe he afflicteth me with hardneſs of heart. O that my body had ſuffered all my life long, ſo that he would be pleaſed to releaſe

leaſe my ſoul, and eaſe my conſcience, this burdened conſcience!

Gribauldus being willing to eaſe his mind from the continual meditation of his ſins; as alſo to ſound how for the preſent he ſtood affected to the Romiſh Church, aſked him what he thought became of the ſouls of men ſo ſoon as they departed out of the body? To which he anſwered;

Although this be not ſo fully revealed in ſcripture, yet I verily believe that the ſouls of the elect go preſently to the kingdom of glory, and not that they ſleep in the body, as ſome do imagine.

Very well, (ſaid one of the ſpectators) why do the Scriptures then ſay, 1 Sam v. 9. that God brings down to hell, and raiſeth up, ſeeing it cannot be meant of the ſtate of the ſoul after death, which as thou ſayeſt, either goeth to heaven without change, or to hell without redemption, it muſt be underſtood of the ſtate of the ſoul in this life, like that wherein thou art at this preſent; and oftentimes we ſee that God ſuffers men to fall into the jaws of deſpair, and yet raiſeth them up again; and therefore deſpair not, but hope it ſhall be even thus with thee, in his good time.

This is the work, (quoth Spira) this is the labour! For I tell you, when I at Venice did firſt abjure my profeſſion, and ſo, as it were, drew an indenture, the Spirit of God often admoniſhed

moniſhed me, and when at Citadella, I did, as it were, ſet my ſeal, the Spirit of God often ſuggeſted to me *Do not write, Spira! Do not ſeal!* Yet reſiſted I the Holy Ghoſt, and did both; and at that very preſent, I did evidently feel a wound in my very will; ſo although I can ſay, I would believe, yet I cannot ſay, I will believe. God hath denied me in the power of will, and it befalls me in this my ſtate, as one that is faſt in irons, and his friends coming to ſee him do pity his ſtate, and perſuade him to ſhake off his fetters, and come out of his bonds, which, God knows he would fain do, but cannot. This is my very caſe; you perſuade me to believe, how fain would I do it, but cannot. O now I cannot!

Then violently graſping his hands together, and raiſing himſelf up.

Behold, ſaith he, I am ſtrong, yet by little and little I decay and conſume; and my ſervants would fain preſerve this weary life, but at length the will of God muſt be done, and I ſhall periſh miſerably, as I deſerve. Rejoice, ye righteous, in the Lord; bleſſed are you whoſe hearts the Lord hath mollified.

Then after ſome pauſe, he went on, I earneſtly deſire to pray to God with my heart, yet I cannot; I ſee my damnation, and I know my remedy is only in Chriſt, yet I cannot ſet myſelf to take hold on it. [Such are the puniſh-

ments

ments of the damned, they repent of the loſs to heaven, they cannot mend their ways.

As he was thus ſpeaking, he obſerved divers flies that came about him, and lighted on him; *Behold*, ſaid he, *now alſo Beelzebub comes to his banquet; you ſhall ſhortly ſee my end; and in me, an example to many, of the juſtice and judgment of God.*

About this time came in two biſhops (with divers ſcholars of the univerſity) one of them Paulus Vergerius, having obſerved Spira more than any other, being continually converſant with him, told him, That his ſtate was ſuchas rather ſtood in need of prayer than advice; and therefore deſired him to pray with him in the Lord's prayer: Spira conſented, and he began.

[*Our Father which art in heaven.*]

Then breaking forth into tears, he ſtopped, but they ſaid, It is well, your grief is a good ſign.——

I bewail ſaid he) my miſery, for I perceive, I am forſaken of God, and cannot call to him from my heart, as I was wont to do.——

Yet let us go on, ſaid Vergerius.

[*Thy kingdom come.*]

O Lord, ſaid Spira, bring me alſo into this kingdom; I beſeech thee ſhut me not out.

[*Give us this day our baily bread.*]

O Lord, added he I have enough, and a bundance to feed this carcaſe of mine, but there is another bread; I humbly beg the bread of

thy grace, without which, I know, I am but a dead man.

[*Lead us not into temptation*]

Seeing, Lord, that I am brought into temptation. help me, Lord, that I may eſcape ; the enemy hath overcome, help me, I beſeech thee to overcome this cruel tyrant

Theſe things he ſpake with a mournful voice, the tears trickling down abundantly, and expreſſing ſuch affection and paſſion, as turned the bowels of thoſe there preſent with grief and compunction.

They then turning to Spira, ſaid, You know that none call Chriſt Jeſus, the Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt ; you muſt therefore think of yourſelf, according to that ſoft affection, which you expreſs in your prayers ; infering thereby, that God hath not wholly caſt you off, or bereaved you of his Spirit utterly.

I perceive (ſaid Spira) that I call to him to my eternal damnation ; for I tell you again, it is a new and unheard of example, that you find in me.

If Judas, ſaid they, had but out-lived his days, which by nature he might have done, he might have repented, and Chriſt would have received him to mercy, and yet he ſinned moſt grievouſly againſt his Maſter, which did ſo eſteem him, as to honour him with the dignity of an apoſtle, and did maintain and feed him.

He anſwered, Chriſt did alſo feed and honour me,

me, neither yet is my fault one jot leſs than that of his, becauſe it is no more honour to be perſonally preſent with Chriſt in the fleſh, than to be in his preſence by the illumination of his holy Spirit. Beſides, I deny that ever Judas could have repented how long ſoever he had lived; for grace was quite taken from him, as it is now with me.

O Spira, ſaid they, you know you are in a ſpiritual deſertion, you muſt therefore not believe what Satan ſuggeſts; he was ever a liar from the beginning, and a mere impoſtor, and will caſt a thouſand lying fancies into your mind, to beguile you withal; you muſt rather believe thoſe whom you judge to be in a good ſtate, and more able to diſcern of you then yourſelf: believe us, and we tell you, that God will be merciful unto you.

"There is the knot, (ſaid Spira) would I "could believe, but I cannot."

Then he began to reckon up what fearful dreams and viſions he was continually troubled withal; that he ſaw the devils come flocking into the chamber and about his bed, terrifying him with ſtrange noiſes; that thoſe were not fancies, but that he knew them as real as the ſtanders by. And that beſides theſe outward terrors, he felt continually a racking torture in his mind, and a continual butchery of his conſcience, being the very proper pangs of the damned wights in hell.

Caſt

Caſt away theſe fancies, (ſaid Gribauldus) thoſe are but illuſions, humble yourſelf in the preſence of God, and praiſe him.

" The dead praiſe not the Lord, anſwered " he) nor they that go down to the pit. We " that are drowned in deſpair, are dead, and " already gone down into the pit: what hell " can be worſe than deſperation, or what great- " er puniſhment? The gnawing worm, un- " quenchable fire, horror, confuſion, and " (which is worſe than all) deſperation itſelf " continually torments me; and now I count " my preſent ſtate worſe than if my ſoul, ſe- parated from my body, were with Judas, and " the reſt of the damned, and therefore now " deſire rather to be there, than to live in the " body"

One being preſent, repeated certain words of the Pſalms, *If thy children forſake the law and walk not in my judgments, I will viſit their tranſgreſſions with rods, and their iniquity with ſtripes; nevertheleſs my loving-kindneſs I will not utterly take from them, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail* Mark this, O Spira, *My covenant I will not break.*

Theſe promiſes (ſaid Spira) belong only to the elect, which if tempted, may fall into ſin, but are again lifted up. and recovered out, as the prophet ſaith; *Though he fall he ſhall not be utterly caſt down; for the Lord upholdeth him:* therefore Peter could riſe, for he was e- " lected;

lected; but the reprobates when they fall, cannot riſe again, as appears in Cain, Saul and Judas. God deals one way with the elect, and another with the reprobate.

The next day he prayed with them in the Latin tongue, and that with excellent affection, as outwardly appeared. Bleſſed be God, (ſaid Vergerius) theſe are no ſigns of eternal reprobation, you muſt not, O Spira, ſeek out the ſecret counſels of God's election and reprobation; for no man can know, ſo long as he lives, whether by his good or bad deeds, he be worthy of God's love or anger. Do you not know, that the prophet David complained that God had caſt off his ſoul?

"I know this, quoth Spira, I know the mer-
" cies of God are infinite, and do ſurpaſs the
" ſins of the whole world, and that they are
" effectual to all that believe; but this faith,
" and this hope is the gift of God; O that he
" would give it me! But it is as impoſſible, as
" to drink up the ſea at a draught: as for that
" of Solomon, if he had ever taſted that which
" I feel by woeful experience, he would never
" have ſpoken as he did; but the truth is, ne-
" ver had mortal man ſuch an evident experi-
" ence of God's anger and hatred againſt him
" as I have. You that are in a good ſtate,
" think repentance and faith to be a work of
" great facility; and therefore you think it an
" eaſy matter to perſuade men to believe; the

" whole

" whole need not the phyſican; and he that is
" well, can ſoon give counſel to ſuch as are ill;
" but this is the hell to me; my heart is har-
" dened, I cannot believe; many are called,
" but few are choſen."

Upon what ground (ſaid they) do you conceive ſo ill an opinion of yourſelf?

" I once did know God to be my Father,
" not only by creation, but by regeneration;
" I knew him by his beloved Son, the Author
" and Finiſher of our ſalvation; I could pray
" to him and hope for pardon of ſin from him,
" I had a taſte of his ſweetneſs peace and com-
" fort; now contrarily, I know God not as a
" Father, but as an enemy: what more? My
" heart hates God, and ſeeks to get above him
" I have nothing elſe to fly to but to terror and
" deſpair.

Belike you think then, (ſaid they) that thoſe that have the earneſt and firſt fruits of God's Spirit, may notwithſtanding fall away?

" The judgments of God are a deep abyſs,
" ſaid he, we are ſoon drowned if we enter in-
" to them; he that thinketh he ſtandeth, let
" him take heed leſt he fall; as for myſelf, I
" know I am fallen back, and that I once did
" know the truth, though it may be not ſo
" thoroughly; I know not what to ſay, but
" that I am one of that number which God
" hath threatened to tear in pieces."

Say not ſo, anſwered they, for God may come,

come, tho' at the laſt hour; keep hold therefore at the laſt by hope.

" This quoth he, is my caſe; I tell you, I " cannot; God hath deprived me of hope; this " brings terror to my mind, and pines this bo- " dy which now is ſo weak; as it cannot per- " form the ſeveral offices thereof: for as the " elect have the Spirit teſtifying that they are " the ſons of God; ſo the reprobates, even " while they do live, do often feel a worm in " their conſcience, whereby they are condemn- " ed already: and therefore as I perceived this " wound inflicted on my mind and will, I " knew that I wanted the gifts of ſaving grace, " and that I was utterly undone. God chaſ- " teneth his children with temporary afflicti- " ons, that they may come as gold out of the " fire: but puniſheth the wicked with blind- " neſs in their underſtandings, and hardneſs of " heart, and woe be to ſuch from whom God " takes his holy Spirit."

Here one rebuked him, and told him, he gave too much credit to ſenſe, that he was not to believe himſelf, but rather him that was in good eſtate, and I teſtify unto you (ſaid he) that God will be merciful to you.

" Nay, anſwered he, again, becauſe I am " in this ill ſtate, therefore can I believe no- " thing but what is contrary to my ſalvation " and comfort; but you that are ſo ſoon con- " fident of your good eſtate, look that it be

" true,

" true, for it is no ſuch ſmall matter to be aſ-
" ſured of ſincerity. A man need be exceed-
" ing ſtrongly grounded in the truth, before
" he can be able to affirm ſuch a matter as ye
" now do; 'tis not the performance of a few
" formal duties, but a mighty conſtant labour,
" with all intention of heart and affection, with
" full deſire and endeavour continually, to ſet
" forth God's glory, there muſt be neither fear
" of legators, inquiſitors, priſons, nor any death
" whatſoever: many think themſelves happy,
" that are not; it is not every one that ſaith,
" Lord, Lord, that ſhall go to heaven."

They came in another day, and found him with his eyes ſhut, as if he had been drowſy, and very loth to diſcourſe; at which time there came in alſo a grave man from Catadella, who demanded of Spira, if he knew him or not? He lifting up his eye-lids, and not ſuddenly remembering him, the man ſaid to him, *I am Preſbyter Antonio Fontauſie*; I was with you at Venice, ſome eight weeks ſince. "O curſ-
" ed day, ſaid Spira; Oh curſed day! O that I
" had never gone thither! Would to God I had
" then died!"

Afterwatds came in a prieſt called Barnardus Sardonius bringing with him a book of exorciſms, to conjure this devil; whom, when Spira ſaw, ſhaking his head, ſaid;

" I am verily perſuaded indeed, that God
" hath lett me to the power of the devil: but
" ſuch

"ſuch they are, as are not to be found in your "litany; neither will they be caſt out by ſpells."

The prieſt proceeding in his intended purpoſe, with a ſtrong uncouth geſture. and with a loud voice, abjured the ſpirit to come into Spira's tongue, and to anſwer: Spira deriding his fruitleſs labour, with a ſigh turned from him.

A biſhop being there preſent, ſaid to Spira, Brother, God hath put virtue into the word and ſacraments, and we have uſed the one means, and we find not that effect which we deſire; ſhall we try the efficacy of the ſacraments? Surely if you take it as a pure chriſtian ought to receive the body and blood of Chriſt, it will prove a ſovereign medicine for your ſick ſoul. This I cannot do, (anſwered he) for thoſe that have no right to the promiſes, have no right to the ſeals. The Euchariſt was appointed only for believers; if we have no faith, we eat and drink judgment to ourſelves. I received it about a month ſince; but I do not well in ſo doing, for I took it by conſtraint; and ſo I took it to my deeper condemnation.

Here Vergerius began to importune him earneſtly to beware that he did not wilfully reſiſt grace, and put himſelf out of heaven, charging him vehemently, by all the love that was between them; by the love that he bore to his children; yea, to his own ſoul, that he would ſet himſelf ſeriouſly to return to that faith and hope which once he had in the death of Chriſt, with

with many ſuch like words. Spira having heard much of the like matter formerly, and being ſomewhat moved, ſaid, You do but repeat, Vergerius, what ſhould I hope? Why ſhould I believe? God hath taken faith from me; ſhew me then whither I ſhall go; ſhew me a heaven whereto I ſhall retire. You tell me of God's mercy, when as God hath caſt me off. You tell me of Chriſt's interceſſion, I have denied him. You command me to believe, I ſay I cannot; you bring me no comfort: your command is as impoſſible for me to obey, as to keep the moral law. If you would perſuade one to love God with all his heart, ſoul and ſtrength, and God gives him no power, can he perform your deſire? Doth not the Church tell us to ſing, *Direct us, O Lord, to keep thy commandments?* Hypocrites ſay, they love God with all their hearts, but they lie; for my part I will not lie, but tell you plainly, ſuch is my caſe, that tho' you ſhould never ſo much importune me to hope or believe, though I deſire it, yet I cannot. For God, as a puniſhment of my wickedneſs, hath taken away from me all his ſaving graces, as faith, hope, and all. I am not the man therefore that you take me for. Perhaps you think I delight in this ſtate; if I could but conceive the leaſt ſpark of hope of a better ſtate hereafter, I would not refuſe to endure the moſt heavy weight of the wrath of that great God; yea, for twenty thouſand years, ſo that I might at length attain

attain to the end of that miſery, which I now know to be eternal.—But I tell you, my will is wounded. Who longs more to believe than I do?—But all the ground work of hope is gone!—For, if the teſtimonies of the holy ſcriptures be true, as they certainly are true) is not this as true, *Whoſoever denies me before men, him* (ſays Chriſt) *will I deny before my Father who is in heaven.*

Is not this as juſtly my caſe (continued he) as if it had been intended againſt this very perſon of mine?—And I pray you, what ſhall become of ſuch as Chriſt denieth, ſeeing there is no other name under heaven whereby yon look to be ſaved?

What ſaith St. Paul to the Hebrews?—*It is impoſſible for thoſe who once were enlightened, and have taſted of the heavenly gifts, and were partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, if they fall away, to be renewed to repentance.* What can be more plain againſt me? Is not that ſcripture alſo, *If we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſin, but a looking for of judgment.* The ſcripture ſpeaks of me; St Paul tells me, *It had been better I had never known the way of righteouſneſs, than after I had known it, to turn from the holy commanament.* It had been better I had not known, and yet then my condemnation had been moſt certain. Do you not ſee evidently that I have willfully denied the known truth?

truth? I may juſtly expect, not only damnation, but worſe, if worſe may be imagined. God will have me undergo the juſt puniſhment of my ſin, and make me an example of his wrath for your ſakes.

The company preſent admired his diſcourſe ſo grievouſly accuſing himſelf of his fore-paſt life; ſo gravely and wiſely debating, concerning the judgments of God, that they then were convinced, that it was not frenzy, or madneſs, that had poſſeſſed him; and being as it were, in admiration of his ſtate, Spira proceeded again in this manner.

"Take heed to yourſelves, it is no light or "eaſy matter to be a Chriſtain; it is not bap- "tiſm, or reading of the ſcriptures, or boaſting "of faith in Chriſt, although even theſe are "good, that can prove one to be an abſolute "Chriſtain. You know what I ſaid before, "there muſt be a conformity in life. A Chriſ- "tian muſt be ſtrong, unconquerable, not car- "rying an obſcure profeſſion, but reſolute ex- "preſſing the image of Chriſt, and holding out "againſt all oppoſitions to the laſt breath; he "muſt give all diligence, by righteouſneſs "and holineſs to make his calling and election "ſure. Many they are that ſnatch at the pro- "miſes in the goſpel, as if they undoubtedly "did belong to them, and yet remain ſluggiſh "and careleſs, and being flattered by the things "of this preſent world, they paſs on their

"courſe

"courſe in quietneſs and ſecurity, as if they "were the only happy men, whom nevertheleſs "the Lord in his providence hath ordained "to eternal wrath, as you may ſee in St. "Luke's rich man. Thus it was with me, "therefore taſte heed."

Then came one of his nephews, and offered him ſome ſuſtenance, which he diſdainfully refuſing, ſo moved the young man's choler, that he charged him with hypocriſy and diſſimulation, or frenzy, to whom Spira gravely anſwered and ſaid, "You may interpret the matter as you "will, but I am ſure, I am not only the actor, "but the argument and matter of the tragedy. "I would it were frenzy either feigned or true; "for if it were feigned, I could then put it off "at pleaſure, if it were a real frenzy, yet there "was ſome hope of God's mercy, whereas now "there is none; for I know God has pronounced me an enemy, and guilty of high treaſon "againſt his majeſty. I am caſt away as a veſſel of his wrath, yet dare you call it diſſembling and frenzy? And can you mock at the "formidable example of the heavy wrath of "God, that ſhould teach you fear and terror? "But it is natural for the fleſh, either out of "malice or ignorance, to ſpeak perverſely of "the works of God. The natural man diſcerneth not the things that be of God becauſe "they are ſpiritually diſcerned."

How can it be (ſaid Gribauldus) that you can

thus excellently diſcourſe of the judgment of God, and of the graces of his holy Spirit! What! you find the want of them, and earneſtly deſire them, and yet you think you are utterly deprived of them!

"Take this for certain, (ſaid he) I want the "main grace of all, and that which is abſo- "lutely neceſſary: and God doth many times "extort moſt true and ſtrange teſtimonies of "his Majeſty's juſtice and mercy, yea out of "the mouths of mere reprobates; for even Ju- "das, after he had betrayed his Maſter, was "conſtrained to confeſs his ſin, and to juſtify "the innocency of Chriſt; and therefore if I "do the like, it is no new or ſtrange matter. "God hath taken faith from me, and left other "common gifts, for my deeper condemnation "By how much the more I remember what I "had, and hear others diſcourſe of what they "have, by ſo much the more is my torment, "in that I know what I want, and know there "is no way to be relieved."

Thus ſpake he, the tears all the while trickling down, profeſſing that his pangs were ſuch as that the damned wights in hell endure not the like miſery; that his ſtate was worſe than that of Cain, or Judas, and therefore he deſired to die.

"Yet behold (ſaid he) the ſcriptures are ac- "compliſhed in me, They ſhall deſire to die, "and death ſhall fly from them."

And

And verily he ſeemed exceedingly to fear leſt his life ſhould be drawn out yet longer, finding no eaſe nor reſt, ever and anon crying out, *O miſerable wretch! O miſerable wretch!* Then turning to the company he beſought them in this manner.

"O brethren! take a diligent heed to your "life; make more account of the gift of God's "Spirit than I have done. Learn to bewail "my miſery: think not you are aſſured Chriſ- "tains, becauſe you underſtand ſomething of "the goſpel: take heed you grow not ſecure "on that ground; be conſtant and unmoveable "in the maintenance of your profeſſion; con- "feſs even till death, if you be called thereto; "he that loveth father and mother, brothers, "ſiſters, ſons, daughters, kindred, houſes or "lands, more than Chriſt, is not worthy of "him."

These words (ſaid they) do not ſound like the words of a wicked reprobate.

"I do but here imitate (ſaid Spira) the rich "glutton in the goſpel, who, tho' in hell was "careful that his brethren ſhould not come to "the place of torment. And I ſay to you, "brethren take heed of this miſerable eſtate "wherein I am."

Then turning himſelf to certain young men that were preſent, he deſired them to conceive him aright.

"I do not ſpeak this, (ſaid he) to derogate

" from the certainty of ſaving faith, and the " promiſes of the goſpel, for they are moſt ſure; " but take heed of relying on that faith that " works not a holy and unblameable live, wor- " thy of a believer. Credit me, it will fail; " I have tried; I preſumed I had gotten the " right faith, I preached it to others; I had all " places in ſcripture in memory, that might " ſupport it; I thought myſelf ſure, and in the " mean time living impiouſly and careleſsly, " and behold now the judgment of God hath " overtaken me, not to correction, but to con- " demnation——And now you would have me " to believe, but it will not be; for I feel too " late, that good things belong only to ſuch as " are good, whoſe ſins are covered with Chriſt's " death and blood, as with a veil, and guarded " with his righteous merits, from the flood of " God's wrath, even as with a mighty wall, leſt " miſerable mortals ſhould be ſwallowed up " with the greatneſs of their ſins. But as for " me, I have, as it were, wilfully with my " hands, pulled down the ramparts; behind " which I might have reſted with ſafety. And " now are the ſwelling waters come even to " my ſoul, and I am caſt away!"

One of his familiar friends chanced to ſay, that certainly he was overcome with melancholy; which being overheard, Spira anſwered,

" Well, be it ſo, (replied he) ſeeing you will " needs have it ſo. Thus alſo is God's wrath

" manifeſted

" manifeſted againſt me, in that he hath taken " from me the uſe of my underſtanding and " reaſon, ſo as I can neither rightly eſteem and " judge of my diſtemper, nor hope of remedy. " You ſee, brethren, what a dangerous thing it " is, to ſtop or ſtay in things that concern " God's glory; eſpecially to diſſemble upon any " terms. What a fearful thing it is to be near, " and almoſt a Chriſtian? Never was the like " example to this of mine; and therefore if " you be wiſe, you will ſeriouſly conſider there- " of —O that God would let looſe his hand " from me, that it were with me now, as in " time paſt! I would ſcorn all threats of the " moſt cruel tyrants, bear torments with invin- " cible reſolution, glory in the outward pro- " feſſion of Chriſt, 'till I were choaked in the " flames, and my body conſumed to aſhes."

You ſay you are deſperate, O Spira, (ſaid they) why then do you not ſtrive with ſome weapon or other violently to make an end of your life, as deſperate men uſe to do;

Let me have a ſword, (ſaid Spira).

Why, what would you do with it? (quoth they).

I cannot tell you (ſaid he) *what this mind would move me to upon occaſion, nor what I would do.*

They perceiving ſmall effects of all this their labour, but rather that he grew worſe; for the avoidlng of a concourſe of people (for every day

ſeldom fewer than twenty continued with him) and to ſtop the courſe of fame which was continually blown abroad of him, they conſulted to carry him back again into his own country; and thoſe of his friends that came to comfort him, began to take their laſt leave of him. Vergerius, among the reſt, required, That at their parting, they might pray together with him. Spira conſented hardly, and as unwillingly performed.

"For, (ſaid he) my heart is eſtranged from "God; I cannot call him Father from my "heart; all good motions are quite gone; my "heart is full of malediction, hatred, and blaſ-"phemy againſt God; I find I grow more and "more hardened in heart, and cannot ſtop my-"ſelf: Your prayers for me ſhall turn to your "profit, they cannot do me any good."

Vergerius then came to take his leave of him; whom Spira embracing, ſaid,

"Although I know that nothing can bring "any benefit to me a reprobate; but that every "thing ſhall tend to my deeper condemnation; "yet I give you moſt hearty thanks for your "kind offices of love and good-will; and the "Lord return it unto you, with a plentiful in-"creaſe of all good."

The next day being brought down to his intended journey, by the way, looking round about him, with a ghaſtly look, he ſaw a knife, lying on a table, to which he running haſtily, ſnatched

ſnatched hold of it, as intending to miſchief himſelf; but his friends laying hold of him, ſtopped him in his purpoſe.—Whereupon, with indignation, he ſaid, *I would I were above God, for I know he will have no mercy on me.*

Thus went he homewards, often ſaying, That he envied the condition of Cain and Judas. He lay about eight weeks in this condition, in a continual burning, neither deſiring, nor receiving any thing but by force, and that without digeſtion, ſo ſpent, that he appeared a perfect anatomy, expreſſing to the view nothing but ſinews and bones; vehemently raging for drink; ever pining, yet fearful of living long; dreadful of hell, yet coveting death, in a continual torment, yet his own tormentor. And thus conſuming himſelf with grief and horror, impatience and deſpair, like a living man in hell, he repreſented an extraordinary example of the juſtice and power of God.

And thus (as far as appeareth) within a few days after his arrival at his own home, he departed this preſent life. Yet this is an occaſion to make us remember, That ſecret things belong unto the Lord our God, but in charity to man, to teach him to hope all things.

For a concluſion, as I would not *break any bruiſed reed*, nor be altogether a Boanerges, thundering and lightening out of judgments, but be alſo a Barnabas, *a ſon of conſolation*, and pour

pour balm of Gilead into thoſe wounded ſpirits who out of human frailty, and Satan's ſuggeſtions, and the world's temptations may too far comply againſt the dictates of their own conſciences, and for the ſame, may happen to be ſmitten with the terrors of the Lord. I ſhall here add one eminent example of a great light of the church that fell in that kind, and was brought to the very brink of deſpair, and yet by God's grace repented, and was happily reſtored. But let not the reader think a ſlight or ſuperficial repentance would ſerve the turn; you ſhall ſoon perceive by the vehemence of his expreſſions, proceeding from a heart all over in confuſions and agonies; what foul convulſions he had endured, before he could receive any glimpſe of comfort.

The caſe is that of ORIGEN, a perſon for learning, zeal and other gifts, as famous as any in the primitive church, after the apoſtles days. In the reign of Decius, for the doctrine of Chriſt, he underwent bands, and torments in his body, racking, and bars of iron, dungeons; beſides ſeveral threats of death and burning, &c. At length hereing that ſome Chriſtians were carried to an idol temple, to force them to ſacrifice, he out of his zeal, ran thither to encourage and diſſuade them from it: when his adverſaries ſaw him, they let go the other, and laid hold upon him, putting him to his choice, whether he would offor incenſe to the

the idol, or have his body defiled with a foul and ugly Blackmoor. He chooſes to offer incenſe. Then did they preſently put incenſe into his trembling hands; and whilſt he demured upon it, they took his hands, and cauſed him to throw it into the fire, and thereupon preſently cried out, *Origen hath ſacrificed! Origen hath ſacrificed!* After this fact he was excommunicated by the church, and being filled with ſhame and ſorrow, he left Alexandria, and came to Jeruſalem, where he was even conſtrained by importunity to preach to them. He took his Bible, opened it, and the firſt place he caſt his eyes upon, was this ſcripture, *Unto the wicked God ſaith, Why doſt thou preach my law, and take my covenant in thy mouth?* Pſal. l. 16. ——When he read theſe words, he ſat down and burſt out into abundance of tears, the whole congregation weeping with him alſo, ſo that he was not able to ſay any more unto them. After this he wandered up and down in great grief and torment of conſcience, and wrote the following *Lamentation.*

ORIGEN's LAMENTATION.

IN the bitterneſs of grief of mind, I go about to ſpeak unto them, who ſhall hereafter read this confuſed writing. But how can I ſpeak, when my tongue is tied up, and my lips dare

dare not once more wag? My tongue doth not his office; my throat is dried up, and all my ſenſes and inſtruments are polluted with iniquity.—O ye ſaints and bleſſed of God, with wateriſh eyes, and wet cheeks ſoaked in dolour and pain, I beſeech you to fall down before the ſeat of Almighty God for me, a miſerable ſinner; who by reaſon of my ſins, dare not crave ought at the hands of God —Woe is me, becauſe of the ſorrow of my heart.—Woe is me, my mother, that ever thou broughteſt me forth. A righteous man to be converſant in unrighteouſneſs!—An heir of the kingdom of God to be an inheritor of the kingdom of Satan!—A miniſter to be found wallowing in impiety!—A man beautified with honor and dignity, to be in the end blemiſhed with ſhame and ignominy.—A lofty turret yet ſuddenly thrown to the ground --A burning light, yet forthwith darkened.--A fruitful tree, yet quickly withered!—A running fountain, yet by and by dried up!—Woe is me that ever I was decked with gifts and graces, and now ſeen pitifully deprived of all.——But who will miniſter moiſture to my head? And who will give ſtreams of tears unto my eyes that I may bewail myſelf in this my ſorrowful plight. Alas! O my miniſtry, how ſhall I lament thee?—O all ye my friends, tender my caſe and pity my perſon, that am ſo dangerouſly wounded!—Pity me, O ye my friends, for that I have now troden under foot, the ſeals

ſeals and cogniſance of my profeſſion; and joined in league with the devil.—Pity me, O ye my friends, for that I am rejected and caſt away from before the face of God Almighty. There is no ſorrow comparable to my ſorrow; there is no affliction that exceeds my affliction; no bitterneſs that paſſeth my bitterneſs; no lamentation more lamentable than mine; neither is there any ſin greater than mine; and there is no ſalve for me. Where is that good ſhepherd of ſouls? Where is he that went down from Jeruſalem to Jericho, which ſalved and cured him that was wounded by thieves? Seek me out, O Lord, that am fallen from the higher Jeruſalem; which has broken the vow which I made in baptiſm, *&c.* Alas! that ever I was doctor, and now occupy not the room of a diſciple. Thou knoweſt, O Lord, that I fell againſt my will; whereas I went about to enlighten others, I darkened myſelf. When I endeavoured to bring others from death to life, I brought myſelf from life to death. When I preſented others before God, I preſented myſelf before the devil. When I deſired to be found a friend and favourer of godlineſs, I was found a foe and a furtherer of iniquity. When I ſet myſelf againſt the aſſemblies of the wicked and reproved their doings, there found I ſhame, and the moſt peſtilent wounds of the devil. Some promiſed me to be baptized; but after that I paſſed from them, the devil that ſame night

night transformed himſelf into an angel of light and ſaid unto me, When thou art up in the morning, go on and perſuade them and bring them unto God. But the devil going before me, prepared the way, &c. and I, O unhappy creature! ſkipping out of my bed at the dawning day, could not finiſh my wonted devotion, neither accompliſh my uſual prayers; deſiring that all men might be ſaved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; whilſt in the mean time I wrapped myſelf in the ſnares of the devil. I gat me to thoſe wicked men, and required them to perform the covenant made the night before I, ſilly ſoul! knowing not their ſubtility, till we came to the baptiſm: O blinded heart, how didſt thou not remember? O fooliſh mind, how didſt thou not bethink thyſelf? O witleſs brain, how didſt thou not underſtand? but it was the devil that lulled thee aſleep, and in the end, ſlew thy unhappy and wretched ſoul.——O thou devil, what haſt thou done unto me? How haſt thou wounded me? I bewailed ſometimes, the fall of Sampſon, but now have fallen worſe myſelf. Sampſon had his hair cut off, but the crown of glory is fallen off my head. Sampſon loſt the carnal eyes of his body, but my ſpiritual eyes are put out. It was the wileneſs of a woman that brought confuſion upon him; but it was my tongue that brought me into this ſinful condition.

Alas! my church liveth, yet I am a widower.—

er.—My ſons are alive, yet I am barren.—Every creature rejoiceth, and I alone am deſolate and ſorrowful, *&c.* Bewail me, O ye bleſſed people of God, who am baniſhed from God. Bewail me, who am ſhut out of the wedding-chamber of Chriſt. Bewail me, who am abhorred of the angels, and ſevered from the ſaints.—Who knoweth whether the Lord will have mercy on me, and whether he will pity my fall? Whether he will be moved with my deſolation? Whether he will have reſpect to my humiliation, and incline all his tender compaſſions towards me? I will proſtrate myſelf before the threſhold and porch of his church that I may intreat all people, both ſmall and great, ſaying unto them, Trample and tread me under foot, who am the unſavoury ſalt; tread upon me, who have no taſte nor ſavour of God; tread upon me who am fit for nothing.

Now let the elders mourn, for that the ſtaff whereupon they leaned is fallen.

Now let the young men mourn, for that their ſchoolmaſter is fallen.

Now let the virgins mourn, for that the advancer of virginity is defiled.

Now let the miniſters mourn, for that their patron and defender is ſhamefully fallen.

Woe is me, that I fell ſo lewdly! Woe is me, that I fell moſt dangerouſly, and cannot riſe again! Aſſiſt me, O holy Spirit, and give me grace to repent. Let the fountain of tears be opened,

opened, and guſh out into ſtreams, to ſee if peradventure I may have grace thoroughly to repent, and to wipe out of the book of my conſcience, the accuſations printed againſt me. But thou, O Lord, think not upon my polluted lips, neither weigh thou the tongue that hath uttered lewd things, but accept of my repentance and have mercy upon me, and raiſe me up out of the mire of corruption; for the puddle thereof hath even choaked me up. Woe is me, that was ſometimes a pearl gliſtering in the golden garland of glory; but now am thrown into the duſt, and trodden in the mire of contempt. Woe is me, that the ſalt of God now lieth on the dunghill.——

Now I will addreſs myſelf and turn my talk unto God. Why haſt thou lifted me up, and caſt me down? I had not committed this impiety, unleſs thou hadſt withdrawn thine hand from me.—But why, O Lord, haſt thou ſhut my mouth by the holy prophet David? How! Have I been the firſt that ſinned, or am I the firſt that fell? Why haſt thou forſaken me, being deſolate, and baniſhed from amongſt the ſaints, and aſtoniſhed me when I ſhould preach thy law? David himſelf, who hath ſhut up my mouth, ſinned too bad in thy ſight; yet upon repentance, thou receiveſt him to mercy. Peter, that was a pillar, after his fall, wipes it away with ſalt tears, not continuing long in the puddle of infidelity.

Now,

Now, I humbly beſeech thee, O Lord, call me back, for that I have troden a moſt perilous and deſtructive way; grant me that good guide and inſtructor, the Holy Ghoſt, that I become not the habitation of devils; but that I may tread under the foot, devils that trod upon me, and overcoming all his ſlights, may be again reſtored to the joys of thy ſalvation.

Now, all ye which behold my wound, tremble for fear, and take heed that ye ſlumber not, nor fall into the like crime; but rather let us aſſemble together and rend our hearts, *&c.* I mourn, and am ſorry at the heart root, O ye my friends, that ever ſo I fell, *&c.*

Let the angels lament over me, becauſe of this my dangerous fall.

Let the aſſemblies of ſaints lament over me, for that I am ſevered from their bleſſed ſocieties.

Let the holy church lament over me, for that I am woefully declined.

Let all the people lament over me, for that I have my death's wound.

Bewail me, that am in like caſe with the reprobate Jews; for this which was ſaid unto them, Why doſt thou preach my law, *&c.* now ſoundeth alike in my ears; what ſhall I do, that am thus beſet with manifeſt miſchiefs Alas! O death, why doſt thou linger? Herein thou doſt ſpite, and bear me malice. O Satan, what miſchief haſt thou brought unto me? How haſt thou pierced my breaſt with thy poiſonous dart?

Thinkeſt

Thinkeſt thou that my ruin will avail any thing at all? Thinkeſt thou to procure to thyſelf any eaſe or reſt, whilſt that I am grievouſly tormented; Who is able to ſignify unto thee, whether my ſins be wiped and done away? Whether I ſhall not again be coupled with, and made a companion to the ſaints? O Lord, I fall before thy mercy-ſeat, have mercy upon me, who mourn thus out of meaſure, becauſe I have greatly offended—Rid my ſoul, O Lord, from the roaring lions. The aſſembly of the ſaints doth make interceſſion for me, who am an unprofitable ſervant. Shew mercy, O Lord, to thy wandering ſheep, who is ſubject to the rending teeth of the ravenous wolf. Save me, O Lord out of his mouth. Let my ſackcloth be rent aſunder, and gird me with joy and gladneſs. Let me be again received into the joy of my God. Let me be thought worthy of his kingdom, through the earneſt petitions of the church, which ſorroweth over me, and humbleth herſelf to Jeſus Chriſt, in my behalf! To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be all glory and honour, for ever and ever Amen.

FINIS.